

INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF THE RELIGIOUS, MORAL
AND SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS IN EDUCATION

International Handbooks of Religion and Education

VOLUME 1

Aims & Scope

The *International Handbooks of Religion and Education* series aims to provide easily accessible, practical, yet scholarly, sources of information about a broad range of topics and issues in religion and education. Each *Handbook* presents the research and professional practice of scholars who are daily engaged in the consideration of these religious dimensions in education. The accessible style and the consistent illumination of theory by practice make the series very valuable to a broad spectrum of users. Its scale and scope bring a substantive contribution to our understanding of the discipline and, in so doing, provide an agenda for the future.

International Handbook of the Religious, Moral and Spiritual Dimensions in Education

Part One

Edited by

Marian de Souza

Australian Catholic University, Ballarat, Australia

Gloria Durka

Fordham University, New York, USA

Kathleen Engebretson

Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Australia

Robert Jackson

University of Warwick, UK

and

Andrew McGrady

Dublin City University, Ireland



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PREFACE

In today's complex and shrinking world, there has been, particularly in western cultures, an identifiable change in the individual's relationship with religious traditions, and some of these changes have also permeated non-western cultural traditions, as they have been exposed to, and influenced by, western life styles and contexts through developments in communication and technology. This has tended to result in secular and materialistic cultures, where attention in education is focused on the outer life of the individual, and the attainment of knowledge and skills that lead to social status and success. Another outcome has been the increased diversity in culture and religion in societies that were once mono-cultural and mono-religious. While this religious and cultural multiplicity has certainly had a positive impact in the blending of cultural expressions and the growth of inclusive communities, there has also been evidence of the spread of religious chauvinism and intolerance.

Out of this context has emerged a strong and vital interest in human religiosity, spirituality and values, and many are searching for meaning both within and without religious traditions today to seek answers to ethical and moral questions that have been generated by the knowledge and technological explosion. This movement has renewed interest in the lifelong learning aspects of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education. As well, it has generated spirited debate about the nature, purpose and practice of religious education; the place and nature of religious education in secular societies; the relationship between religion and spirituality; the extent to which discussions about religious education can ever be free of ideology; the role of citizenship, ethics and values education, and the application of all of these to global issues.

These are the areas that provide the focus and content of *The International Handbook of the Religious, Moral and Spiritual Dimensions in Education*. They present the research and professional practice of scholars who are engaged daily in the consideration of these aspects of learning and teaching. The result is a collection of essays which are wide ranging, analytical, and scholarly and which reflect contemporary thinking about these dimensions in education, in all of its internationality, as it is today. As well, it proposes new understandings and reflections that point to future directions, which will acknowledge and address these dimensions in education by implementing innovative, exciting and challenging strategies. These essays will be of interest to academics, teachers, students and others who are

interested in the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education throughout the life cycle. In addition, they will inform current research and practice, and will propose guiding principles for future curriculum development in the discipline.

The essays in the first section of the collection deal with the philosophical and theoretical foundations of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education. Ultimately they are concerned with what it means to educate, and the requirement that educators face this question constantly in their work. As Gloria Durka claims in her introductory chapter to this section, theory always underlies educational practice, whether this is conscious or not on the part of the educator. Good education is underpinned by good theory, moreover, theory that is known, critiqued, consciously applied and constantly evaluated. "Teachers who do not understand the models on which their methods are based, are confined to doing what their unexamined habits direct them to do. Thus, they are not the authors of their actions" claims Durka. Section one of this collection proceeds to present a variety of theoretical and philosophical perspectives that may influence teachers' choice of practice. Included in this section are theoretical and philosophical perspectives regarding religious education, perspectives from a feminist point of view, contributions on the significance of spirituality for education and discussions about critical issues that have bearing on the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education.

The second section of the handbook, edited by Robert Jackson, is concerned broadly with issues of religious education and culture. As Jackson says, "the contributions reflect recent debates about the relationship between religion and culture against the background of the wider debate about modernity and postmodernity" and they come mainly from different parts of the western world (including Europe, North America and Australasian), with Turkey and South Africa providing links to the continents of Asia and Africa respectively. In his introductory chapter for the section, Jackson points out the various ways in which the term religious education is used, and reminds the reader to be aware of these differences in reading the essays in the section. With these differences in mind, the reader is taken through a series of essays which traverse postmodernity, religious and cultural pluralism; the relationship between religion and culture; the varying relationships between religious education and values education; methodology in the fields of the study of religious culture and religious education; case studies of religion in public education and religious education for ethnic and religious minorities.

Section Three of the collection, edited by Kath Engebretson, examines "theory about practice" presenting discussion of practical issues, such as choosing and presenting content, developing curricula, engaging students in inquiry through a lens of various theories about how this should be done. As Engebretson points out, this section attends to the questions: "What is this discipline about? What is its nature and purpose?" Engebretson argues in her introductory chapter that confusion about theory within the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education or perhaps, more exactly, confusion about the particular branch of theory to which one adheres, leads to confusion of intention in teaching, to confusion in teaching practice and finally to confused teachers and students. In this section

of the collection, the various branches of theory are presented as a series of sometimes overlapping conversations, which propose certain viewpoints about how the religious, spiritual and moral dimensions of education should be practised. These are categorized as: philosophical, theological and ecclesial conversations; phenomenological conversations; conversations concerning the interface between religious, moral and spiritual education; conversations about the educational nature of religious education and conversations about religious education beyond the school. The categories provide a convenient classification within which to map the field of theory in religious education.

Andrew Mcgrady, the editor of the fourth section, argues that “there is considerable diversity concerning the provision of religious, moral and spiritual education both between countries across the world and within countries themselves”. These essays are concerned with policy regarding the provision of religious, moral and spiritual education in schools and they illustrate the diversity, ranging across the legal, philosophical and theological foundations of policy; the issues that are raised by the use of public space for religious, spiritual and moral education; multi-faith syllabuses for religious education; proposals to introduce ‘objective’ study of religion in countries which prohibit religious education in state schools, and research into the attitudes of religious educators towards issues of gender and equality. This section of the collection illustrates in many ways, and through many cases, the complex relationships that exist between religious, moral and spiritual education and public policy makers; and it provides an informative portrait of this relationship across the world.

The fifth and last section, edited by Marian de Souza reflects the pedagogical aspects of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions in education. Based on scholarship and research, the essays in this section discuss theoretical underpinnings of learning programs that seek to address these dimensions. They highlight the complementarity of the rational, emotional and spiritual elements in the learning process and “offer a variety of learning contexts and practices that have been carefully researched and developed and, in many cases, trialled to successful outcomes”. The content of this final section should provide inspirational and exciting ideas, strategies and resources for scholars and practitioners alike.

Overall, the editors and contributors present this collection of essays as a testament to the educators and scholars who have assisted in bringing the discipline of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education to its present richness. Inherent in the collection are directions for the future, where the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education may offer strategies for education for hope, peace and justice in an inclusive and unified world.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Dr. Marian de Souza is a Senior Lecturer, student adviser and Acting Editor of the *Journal of Religious Education*. Her research is in contemporary understandings of spirituality, addressing young people's spirituality in education, using an arts-based approach to promote learning across the curriculum, and investigating how ethnic groups in a pluralist society hand on their cultural and spiritual heritage.

Gloria Durka Fordham University, New York, USA.

Kathleen Engebretson, is an Associate Professor in the school of Religious Education at Australian Catholic University. She is a teacher, writer, researcher, curriculum developer and academic in the field of religious education theory and practice. Her research interests include all aspects of religious education curriculum and pedagogy, and in recent years she has conducted research into issues surrounding teenage boys and religious and spiritual education. While working in secondary schools in Melbourne she played a leading role in introducing religious studies courses into the senior secondary curriculum, and has continued to provide leadership and professional development for teachers who teach these courses.

Robert Jackson is Professor of Education and Director of the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick (UK). He has directed a range of externally funded research projects on religious education and religion and childhood. He is currently involved in Council of Europe projects on intercultural education and religious diversity and intercultural citizenship and is leading the Warwick contribution to an EU project on religious education and social cohesion involving 10 European universities. His books include *Religious education: An interpretive approach* (Hodder & Stoughton 1997), *International perspectives on citizenship, education and religious diversity* (RoutledgeFalmer 2003) and *Rethinking religious education and plurality: Issues in diversity and pedagogy* (RoutledgeFalmer 2004). Since 1996 he has been Editor of the *British Journal of Religious Education*. He has a PhD degree from the University of Warwick and in 2006 was awarded the degree of DLitt by the University of Wales for his international research contribution to religious education.

Dr. Andrew G. McGrady is Registrar of the Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University. His teaching and research interests include faith-based schools in multi-cultural societies, the religious, spiritual and moral dimensions of culture and education, education for active citizenship in democratic societies, and the collaborative use of Information and Communications Technology.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Maria da Conceição Azevedo is full professor of Philosophy of Education at the Education and Psychology Department, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Portugal. Her doctorate thesis was on the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa as a contemporary educator and universal master. Her main research interests are Moral and Spiritual Education.

Dr. Linda L. Baratte is Director of the Centre for Theological and Spiritual Development, a lay ministry formation and continuing education program in the Roman Catholic tradition at the College of Saint Elizabeth, Morristown, New Jersey, U. S. A. She is also a member of the Department of Theology at the College.

Joyce Bellous is Associate Professor of Lay Empowerment and Discipleship at McMaster Divinity College, McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. She has taught at the College since 1993. She teaches and researches in the areas of spirituality, ethics, postmodernism and multiculturalism. She is a consultant, speaker and writer for church congregations, seminaries and denominational leaders on the subjects of leadership and ministry education. Her special interest is children and spirituality. She published *Gardening the Heart* (2005), a book of forty devotions on the life of faith and her monograph on spiritual formation titled *Educating Faith* is forthcoming from Clements Publishing (2006).

Inga Belousa is a professor of education and director of a Master's degree Program in Pedagogy at the Faculty of Education and Management, Daugavpils University, Latvia. Her current research addresses issues of philosophy of education, holistic education, and spirituality in education.

Dr. Lucia Berdondini, PhD, Developmental Psychologist, Gestalt Therapist, Research Fellow at the University of Brighton and co-manager of the Working With Others Research and Education Unit. Lucia's research interests are focused on whole school anti-bullying projects (in Italy and UK), implementation of group work skills in pupils of primary and secondary schools, social inclusion, training and support for teachers and teaching assistants.

Sherry H. Blumberg earned both her Master's and her PhD in Jewish education at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. Currently the Education Director at Congregation Am Echod in Lindenhurst, Illinois, she also serves as adjunct professor at both University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee. She was formerly an Associate Professor of Jewish education for 14 years at Hebrew Union College in New York. An innovative Jewish educator for over 36 years, and a co-founder of the Jewish family education movement, she works extensively in the areas of curriculum design, teaching about God and spirituality, informal education, and interreligious dialogue. Dr. Blumberg is listed in *Who's Who in the World* and is a past president of the Religious Education Association of North America. She currently serves as Vice President for Educational Resources of the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education. In Milwaukee, she is a member of the Milwaukee Catholic-Jewish Conference and serves on the board of the Coalition for Jewish Learning.

Michael T. Buchanan is a lecturer in Religious Education at the Australian Catholic University. He has published both nationally and internationally in the field of leadership, management and implementation of curriculum in religious education. His research interests focus on the exploration of factors which impede and assist change in the implementation of curriculum in religious education.

Sandra Carroll lectures in Religious Education at the Strathfield Campus of the Australian Catholic University, Sydney. Her doctoral thesis from San Francisco Theological Seminary was titled 'Teaching about Mary: Professional Development for Religious Educators'. Sandra is married with two teenage sons.

Dr. Eoin G. Cassidy, a priest of the Dublin Archdiocese, is Head of the Department of Philosophy, Mater Dei Institute, Dublin City University. His research interests include: the Philosophy of Friendship, Faith and the challenge of Culture, and Modernity, Post Modernity and Religious identity. His recent publications include: with Leask, I. (Eds.) (2005), *Givenness and God: Question of Jean-Luc Marion*. In the series 'Perspectives in Continental Philosophy', New York: Fordham University Press; (2002), *Measuring Ireland: Discerning Values and Beliefs*, Dublin: Veritas, and, with McGrady, A.G. (Eds.) (2001) *Media and the Marketplace: Ethical Perspectives*, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Dr. Mark Chater is Reader in Education at Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln, UK. He is a religious educator with twenty years' experience in secondary and higher education. His current interests are in spirituality and values in education. He is a member of the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV), book reviews editor of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, and editor (with Cathy Ota) of *Spiritual Education in a Divided World* (Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2006).

David Chidester is professor of religious studies and director of the Institute for comparative religion in South Africa at the University of Cape Town. His publications include *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa*, *Christianity: A Global History*, and *Authentic Fakes: Religion and American Popular Culture*.

Jennie Clifford PhD is a consultant on Religious Education and Faith Formation and the Director of Presentation Global Education Experience. While ministering as a chaplain at University College Cork she carried out an in-depth study of the place of religion in the life of the young adult students.

Maria Helena Gil da Costa teaches at Universidade Católica in the areas of education, creativity and sociology, is a member of the Red Internacional de Motricidad Humana research group, represents The Creative Problem Solving Group, Inc. (Buffalo - USA) in Portugal, and served as principle of a teacher training college for sixteen years. Her current research is in adult education, particularly in the subject of fear and human development.

Dr. Leonie Crotty rsm is Head of Religious Education for the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia. She is a member of the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. Areas of work in her portfolio include the theological and spiritual formation of teachers and leaders in Catholic schools and the provision of curriculum and resources for classroom Religious Education. Leonie's particular interest is leadership in Catholic schools in the context of changing cultural, ecclesial, religious and educational realities.

Sandra Cullen is formerly a teacher of Religious Education and English at Second Level, Sandra Cullen now lectures in Contextual Theology at Mater Dei Institute, Dublin City University. She was Joint Coordinator of the *Logos* Project. She is the author of *Religion and Gender* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005). The focus of her doctoral research is the development of an appropriate model of religious education for those preparing to be religious educators.

Dr. Jorge Diez is the executive director of Hablemos de Cristo, Inc. He has worked for several years as a religious educator in various educational settings, and has vast experience in multicultural religious education with the Latino community in the United States. He has also published materials on the topic of adult religious education for Latinos.

Dr. Veronica (Rose) Duffy csb is the Head of Mission Services/Religious Education at the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Sale, Australia. Her research is in the fields of Theology and Pastoral Ministry. More specifically, her current research is in adolescent spirituality and in religious art.

Dr. Tony Eaude was headteacher of a multi-ethnic Church primary school in Oxford, U.K., for nine years. Having completed a doctorate into how teachers of young children understand spiritual development, he is now freelance consultant, remaining associated as a Research Fellow with the Department of Educational Studies, University of Oxford.

John L. Elias is Professor of Pastoral Studies and Religious Education in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, Fordham University, USA. His recent publications are *Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education* (2005) and *A History of Christian Education* (2002). His present research focuses on early 20th century American Catholic religious educators.

Dr. Graham English teaches in the School of Religious Education at the Australian Catholic University, Strathfield, New South Wales. He has taught in primary and secondary schools and for some years worked in the Catholic Education Office, Sydney, where he provided professional development for teachers in Religious Education, and where he wrote curriculum material as well as policy aimed at the continuing education in religion of teachers in Catholic schools. He has written school texts in religious education, as well as material to support adult religious education. He is also a published cartoonist and illustrator. His research areas and published articles include religious education curriculum, the educational thought of John Dewey, critical theory, the history of religious education in Australia, what it means to be Catholic in Australia, cartooning, and Zen Buddhism. After completing teacher training with the Christian Brothers he has graduated from the Australian National University, the National Pastoral Institute, the University of Lancaster and the University of Sydney.

Clive Erricker is Hampshire County Inspector for Religious Education in the UK and Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Winchester, UK. His research interests are pedagogy in religious and spiritual education and generational issues concerning religious and cultural transmission in the contemporary world. He is co-director of the *Children and Worldviews Project* and joint editor of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*.

Mireille Estivalezes is a historian and sociologist of religions. She has a PhD from the Ecole pratique des hautes études (Paris) on the teaching of religion in the French lay education system. A member of the Sociology of Religion and Laicity Group (EPHE-CNRS), she has published *Les religions dans l'enseignement laïque* (2005) and contributed to the collected work *La laïcité a-t-elle perdu la raison?* (2001).

Anta Filipšone holds a PhD in Religious Education from Fordham University, NY, USA and currently is Lecturer in Systematic and Practical Theology, Faculty of Theology, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia.

Dr. Dorothea Filus is a research fellow at Monash University Japanese Studies Centre in Australia, where she received her PhD in 2000. She specialises in religion and society in contemporary Japan. She lived in Japan for almost six years during which time she studied, worked and conducted extensive research on Japanese religions, social stratification, globalisation and religious education.

Gary Finlay is Director of the National Centre For Religious Studies, an agency of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference. He was Editor/Coordinator for *Understanding Faith*, the religious education programme for Catholic secondary schools in New Zealand. He has been engaged in curriculum development in religious education since 1985.

Dr. G. P. (Joe) Fleming has worked in Religious Education Consultant for over thirty years as teacher, administrator and academic. He has been appointed the Cardinal Basil Hume Visiting Scholar to Cambridge University for the Lenten period of 2006. His academic interests are in the understanding of the nature and purpose of religious education and what this means for religious education curriculum in schools and parishes. In addition, his doctoral and post doctoral interests have focused on leadership in religious education, on issues surrounding appropriate teacher education for religious education teachers, and on the development of classroom religious education materials.

Namulundah Florence teaches at Brooklyn College's (CUNY) School of Education. Her *bell hooks' engaged pedagogy: A transgressive education for critical consciousness* addresses the challenges of cultural pluralism in the United States and Kenya. It received the American Education Research Award (AERA) Critics Awards as well as the Choice Outstanding Academic Title Award. The second book, *From our mothers' hearts: Bukusu folktales* focuses on education within informal settings.

Liam Gearon is reader in education and director of the Centre for research in human rights at Roehampton University (England); and a research associate at St. Thomas University, Canada. His areas of current research are in religion and human rights, and in freedom of expression.

Adrian Gellel is a lecturer in Catechesis and Religious Education at the University of Malta. He is particularly interested in research Divine Pedagogy, Individual Differences, and Adaptive Teaching. He is also actively involved in the planning and preparation of Catechesis and Youth Ministry in the Catholic Archdiocese of Malta.

Aileen Carlin Giannelli PhD counts it a joy and privilege to have been a student of Maria Harris in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at

Fordham University. She holds a doctorate in Church Leadership from Fordham and serves as an adjunct professor in its School of Education.

Peta Goldberg is a senior lecturer in Religious Education in the Faculty of Education at McAuley Campus, Brisbane of Australian Catholic University. Her research interests are in the areas of religious education and the arts and the teaching of world religions.

Bruce Grelle is a professor in the Department of Religious Studies and Director of the Religion and Public Education Resource Centre at California State University, Chico. His areas of teaching and research are comparative religious ethics and religion and public education. Publications include the co-edited *Explorations in global ethics: Comparative religious ethics and interreligious dialogue* (1998).

Dr. Thomas H. Groome received his Doctorate in Religious Education from the joint graduate program of Columbia University Teachers College and Union Theological Seminary, New York in 1975. He also holds an MA in Religious Education from Fordham University and the equivalent of an MDiv from St. Patrick's Seminary, Carlow, Ireland. His books include *Christian Religious Education* (Harper, 1980), *Sharing Faith* (Harper, 1991), *Educating for Life* (Crossroads, 2000), and *What Makes Us Catholic* (Harper, 2002). Tom is a senior Professor of Theology and Religious Education at Boston College and currently serves as Director of BC's Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry.

Tobin Hart is a father, author, teacher, psychologist, and speaker. He serves as Professor of Psychology at the University of West Georgia and is President of the ChildSpirit Institute, a nonprofit educational and research hub exploring and nurturing the spirituality of children and adults (www.childspirit.org). His work examines consciousness, spirituality, and education.

Harold D. Horell is Assistant Professor of Religious Education at the Fordham University Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education. Dr. Horell teaches courses in moral education, social ministry, and the development of children and youth. He has written on Christian moral education and on postmodernity and religious education.

Philip Hughes is the senior research officer at the Christian Research Association (Australia) and a research fellow at Edith Cowan University. His research has focussed on changes in Australian culture and religious faith and, most recently, on the spirituality of youth. Philip is ordained in the Uniting Church in Australia.

John M. Hull is Honorary Professor of Practical Theology in the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education in Birmingham and Emeritus Professor of Religious Education at the University of Birmingham in England. As

well as his BA and BEd from Melbourne, he has an MA from Cambridge and a PhD from Birmingham. He has an hon. D Theol from Frankfurt and an honorary doctorate from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He is the General Secretary of the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values. His current interest is in the theological education of adults. His web site is www.johnmhull.biz.

Anne Hunt, Associate Professor is a lecturer in systematic theology at Australian Catholic University and at Yarra Theological Union (Melbourne) and Rector of the Ballarat Campus of Australian Catholic University. She is the author of a number of articles and books, most recently *The Trinity: Nexus of the Mysteries of Christian Faith* (Orbis, 2005).

Brendan Hyde is a lecturer in religious education at Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, Australia. His research interest is in the spirituality of young children, and in using hermeneutic phenomenology as a framework for reflecting upon children's spirituality.

Dzintra Ilisko, PhD, is a graduate of Fordham University. She is currently a lecturer at Daugavpils University, Latvia, Faculty of Education and Management, Department of Pedagogy. Her interests include: sustainable education, multicultural, adult education, gender studies, value education, and she has published on these topics.

Recep Kaymakcan is associate professor of religious education in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Sakarya, Turkey. His main research interests are in curriculum development and evaluation in religious education, comparative religious education, teaching Christianity in Turkey, values education together with recent empirical research into religiosity and life perspectives among Turkish adolescents.

William K. Kay is an Assemblies of God minister, and Director of the Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies Reader in Practical Theology, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Wales, Bangor. Prior to this appointment he was a Senior Lecturer in the Department for Education and Professional Studies at King's College, London, and before this he was Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Theology and Education, Trinity College, Carmarthen. Before his appointment at Trinity College Carmarthen, William was a lecturer at Mattersey Hall near Doncaster. William's main research areas are Pentecostal and charismatic theology and history, religious education, church schools, religious development, psychology of religion, and Piagetian psychology.

Dr. Ross Keating is a senior lecturer within the Faculty of Education at Australian Catholic University. His research interests include the use of poetry in awakening

students to an experience of consciousness that challenges existing notions of meaning and purpose and as a medium for contemplative expression and insight.

Anthony J. Kelly, CSsR, after serving as Dean of Theology at Australian Catholic University, is now a Professorial Fellow attached to the Institute of Theology, Philosophy and Religious Education. His special concern for an interdisciplinary theology has occasioned numerous publications dealing with theological connections to philosophy, biblical studies, science, psychology, literature and religious education. He was appointed by Pope John Paul II to the thirty-member International Theological Commission.

Paul King lectures in Chaplaincy Studies at the School of Education Studies, Dublin City University. He has also worked as a teacher of religious education, a chaplain and a guidance counsellor in a number second-level schools in Ireland. His current research is on the role of guidance in education.

Dr. Dermot A. Lane, a priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin, is President of Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University. His research interests include Interreligious Dialogue, Christology, and Eschatology. Author of *Keeping Hope Alive: Stirrings in Christian Theology* (1996/2005) and *The Experience of God: An Invitation to do Theology*, revised and expanded edition 2003 and editor of *Catholic Theology Facing the Future: Historical Perspectives* (2003).

Dr. Sally A. Liddy, is a Senior Lecturer, Signadou Campus, Australian Catholic University. Research interests: eco-theology; Christian spirituality; teaching undergraduate religious education and theology; faith formation of young women.

Dr. Anne Looney is Chief Executive of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in the Republic of Ireland. Her research interests include religious and moral education, assessment, and the impact of globalisation on education policies. Her recent publications include Looney, A. (2001) Curriculum as policy: some implications of contemporary policy studies for the analysis of curriculum policy, with particular reference to post-primary curriculum policy in the Republic of Ireland. *The Curriculum Journal* 12(2), 149–162, and Looney, A. (2003), The Pilgrim School: From hedge to hope. In Prendergast N. and Monahan, L. (Eds.), *Reimagining the Catholic School* (pp. 232–245). Dublin: Veritas.

Terence Lovat is professor of education and pro vice-chancellor at The University of Newcastle, Australia. He has taught and researched in religion, ethics and religious education over many years. His recent research interests have been in religious movement, especially with and between mainstream religions (especially Hinduism and Islam) and new religious movements.

Patricia Malone rsj is an Adjunct Professor of Australian Catholic University in the School of Religious Education where she taught full time for more than twenty years. At present she is a member of the leadership team of her religious congregation, the Sisters of St Joseph. Her field of teaching and research is curriculum development and religious education within the Australian context. Pat has played a leadership role in the field of religious education in Australia.

Joseph McCann C.M. PhD is a priest and religious educator. He was Head of Religion in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin, currently teaches management of pastoral and voluntary organisations at All Hallows College, Dublin, and serves as visiting professor at DePaul University, Chicago. His research concerns the management of ethos, the institutionalisation of religion, and Catholic education.

Roseanne McDougall SHCJ, EdD, a sister of the Holy Child Jesus and Assistant Professor of Religion at LaSalle University in Philadelphia, USA, teaches Educational Philosophy to religious and laity during the August Long Vocation in Nigeria. Roseanne holds a doctorate in religion and education from Teachers College Columbia University in New York.

Dr. Wilna A.J. Meijer is Senior Lecturer in the Philosophy of Education in the Department of Theory and History of Education of the University of Groningen, the Netherlands and Visiting Professor in the Philosophy of Education at the University of Gent, Belgium. Her recent research interests include Islam and Education, and Humanities Education.

Siebre Miedema is Hendrik Pierson Professor for Christian Education, Professor of Educational Foundations in, and Dean of, the Faculty of Psychology and Education, and Professor of Religious Education in the Faculty of Theology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Mary Elizabeth Moore is professor of religion and education, and director of women in theology and ministry, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, USA. Her interests centre on education, process and feminist theologies, justice and reconciliation. Writings include *Ministering with the Earth*, *Teaching from the Heart* and *Teaching as a Sacramental Act*.

Gabriel Moran is a professor in the Department of Humanities and the Social Sciences, New York University. He has written on religious education and related topics for over forty years. Among his twenty books are *Religious Education as a Second Language*, *Showing How: The Act of Teaching* and *A Grammar of Responsibility*.

Vivienne Mountain has been involved in education at primary secondary and tertiary levels of teaching in both the secular government sector and in independent schools sponsored by the Christian faith tradition. Her academic qualifications include education, theology, multicultural education, philosophy, religion and student welfare. Vivienne is currently Chaplain at Firbank Grammar, a large independent Girls' school in Melbourne Australia.

Eleanor Nesbitt is reader in religions and education in the Institute of Education, University of Warwick, England. Her research interests include religious identity formation, and Hindu-related movements and values education. Her publications include: *Sikhism: A Very Short Introduction* (2005, OUP) and *Intercultural Education: Ethnographic and Religious Approaches* (2004, Sussex Academic Press).

Karl Ernst Nipkow, born 1928, is an emeritus professor who taught Practical Theology with an emphasis on Christian and religious education at the Protestant Faculty of Theology at the University of Tübingen from 1968–1995. He is also an educationist who taught at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences at the same university. Among his numerous books (also in Russian and Korean) his recent English written publication is *God, Human Nature and Education for Peace. New approaches to Moral and Religious Maturity*. (Aldershot 2003, Ashgate).

Lucinda A. Nolan earned the PhD in Religious Education from Fordham University in 2004. She has taught theology at Lewis University in Illinois and catechetical studies at Santa Clara University in California. She is currently teaching Religious Education and Catechetics at The Catholic University of America.

James Norman is a Lecturer in the School of Education Studies, Dublin City University where he has been central to the development of post-graduate programmes in teacher education, chaplaincy and pastoral care. He is the author of *Ethos and Education in Ireland* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003) and editor of *At The Heart of Education: School Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care* (Dublin: Veritas, 2004).

Dr. Mary Nuttall rsm is a lecturer in the fields of teaching and classroom management, teaching students with special needs and curriculum development. Her research focuses on soulful learning in which creative steps are taken to develop holistic curriculum programs in collaboration with staff and students within primary, secondary and tertiary education contexts.

Sissel Ostberg is associate professor and dean at the Faculty of Education, Oslo University College, Norway. Her research interests are in religious education, religious and ethnic identity, and Muslim children and young people in Norway.

Cathy Ota is Senior Research Fellow at the Education Research Centre at the University of Brighton, UK and co-editor of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*. In September 2004 she established the Working With Others Research and Education Unit with her colleague Lucia Berdondini, at the University of Brighton. The unit works nationally and internationally with pupils, teachers, parents and staff teams, exploring and developing practical strategies to enhance group processes through self-awareness, social communication, peer support, problem solving and conflict resolution. Current research and work is focused on developing effective groupwork in early years and higher education settings.

Fernand Ouellet is full professor at the Faculty of Theology, Ethics and Philosophy in the University of Sherbrooke, Canada. His research interests are the study of religions in schools and intercultural education: in both areas he has published extensively.

The Rev. Mary Petersen is currently Ministry Leader, Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish, Coromandel Peninsula, New Zealand. She also teaches distance education courses that she has developed for Massey and Otago Universities and the Ecumenical Institute of Distance Theological Studies, in *The Teaching of Religious Education, Curriculum Development, Shaping Religious Education, and Ministry with Children and Families*. She was the National Coordinator of Ministry with Children and Families for the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (2001–2004) and General Secretary of the Churches Education Commission (1990–2000). She was a teacher in secondary and primary schools for 12 years between 1970 and 1990.

Sue Phillips is Head of RE and an Advanced skills Teacher at Bognor Regis Community College, a large comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 18 in the Southern England. She is also Professional Tutor overseeing the training of teachers in a variety of subjects and a counsellor. Sue regularly mounts day courses at her school in Theatre of Learning techniques and presents conferences on the techniques throughout the country.

Jack Priestley is Honorary Research Fellow in the University of Exeter School of Education and Lifelong Learning (U.K.). Formerly, he was Principal of Westhill College of Higher Education, Birmingham. He has a lifelong active interest in the history and philosophy of religious education as well as in the practice of teaching.

Dr. Caroline Renehan is a lecturer in the School of Education of the Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University. Her research interests include Marian and feminist theology, and Gender Studies in the context of Initial Teacher Education. Her recent publications include:(2004a) 'Religion and Gender' in *Religious Education Syllabus Leaving Certificate Draft Guidelines*

for Teachers, Dublin, Department of Education and Science, Government Publications Office; (2004b) 'Religion and Gender' in *Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students - Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus*, Dublin: Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Veritas; and (with Monahan, L, 1998) *The Chaplain: A Faith Presence in the School Community*, Dublin: Columba Press.

Graham Rossiter is Professor of Religious and Moral Education at Australian Catholic University in Sydney. He has conducted professional development seminars throughout Australia and in a number of other countries and has published widely. Current interests are: young people's search for meaning and identity, the spiritual and moral influence of film and television, values education. His next book on Religious Education is titled *Reasons for living: Education and young people's search for meaning, identity and spirituality*.

Cornelia Roux is a Professor in Department of Curriculum Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. Her research projects and interests are: Religion Studies: diversity and inclusivity; children's religious development; religion and cultural diversities; human rights and religions and belief and values systems in multicultural societies.

Richard Rymarz is a lecturer in religious education at Australian Catholic University, St. Patrick's Campus, Melbourne. He has longstanding research interests in how religious beliefs and culture are passed on. He has published widely on religious identity and young adults.

Peter Schreiner is educational researcher at the Comenius-Institut, Protestant Centre for Research and Development in Education. He is also President of the Intereuropean Commission on Church and School (ICCS). Research interests in the field of comparative religious education, education and Europe and intercultural education. Information about his publications available through. www.comenius.de

Daniel G. Scott, Assistant Professor and Graduate Advisor, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada focuses his research on the spiritual life experiences of children and youth particularly early adolescent experience, including rites of passage.

Prof. Mualla Selçuk is the Dean of the School of Divinity at Ankara University where she teaches. Her research interests are:

- New Approaches to teaching about and from Islam
- Religious concepts (Children's understanding of)
- Peace Education
- Interreligious Education

Geir Skeie is associate professor at the Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Stavanger, Norway, where he teaches religious studies and religious education. His research interests are theoretical questions related to the philosophy of religious education, with particular emphasis on issues related to modernity, pluralism and identity.

Joanmarie Smith, CSJ, recently retired from the William A. Chryst Chair of Pastoral Theology at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Currently, she is the Director of Spiritual Formation for Local Pastors. Her most recent books are *A Context for Christianity in the 21st century* and *The joy of teaching*.

John Sullivan Liverpool Hope University is a joint Anglican and Catholic liberal arts foundation, ecumenical and inclusive in spirit, with 7000 students. John Sullivan's current research interests include interconnections between theology and education; the nature of a Christian university; the religious thought of Maurice Blondel; how spirituality relates to scholarship.

Dr. David Tacey is Associate Professor in the School of Critical Enquiry, La Trobe University, Melbourne. He teaches courses on spirituality, analytical psychology and literary studies. He is the author of eight books and eighty-five essays, and his most recent book is *The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality*, London and New York: Routledge, 2004.

Ann M. Trousdale is an Associate Professor at Louisiana State University. Her research interests include how children's literature may be used to foster children's spiritual growth and religious understanding, socio-cultural analysis of children's literature, and reader response to literature. She is a Deacon in the United Methodist church.

Anton C. Vrame, PhD is associate Professor of Orthodox Christian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union and Director of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute in Berkeley, California. He is a leading scholar in Orthodox Christian religious education for the Greek Orthodox Church in America.

Dr. Kevin Williams is Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, Mater Dei Institute, Dublin City University, and a former president of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland. Recent publications include *Faith and the Nation: Religion Culture and Schooling in Ireland* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2005). The research for this chapter was supported by a grant from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Jane Erricker Winchester is an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Education, University of Winchester. She teaches science and citizenship and researches children's spirituality with Clive Erricker and Cathy Ota. Together they founded

the International Journal of Children's Spirituality and initiated the annual conferences on Children's Spirituality.

Andrew Wright is senior lecturer in religious and theological education and coordinator of the Centre for Theology, Religion and Culture at King's College, London, England. His research interests are: religious and spiritual education, theological literacy, pedagogy and hermeneutics, critical realism and educational philosophy, theology of education, Christian formation.

T. John Wright retired in 2005 as dean of the College of the Southern Cross, St. John's College, Auckland and as lecturer in theology, University of Auckland.

SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION ONE: PHILOSOPHICAL/THEORETICAL DISCOURSES ON THE RELIGIOUS, MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION

Gloria Durka

Fordham University, New York, USA

The essays in this section require the reader to think very carefully about what it means to educate. They assert that it is the responsibility of educators to continually face this demand. This requires that educators be active and critical, taking nothing simply on authority but insisting on testing every theory by references to human experience.

As John Dewey (1997; 1910) put it, ‘While it is not the business of education to prove every statement made, any more than to teach every possible item of information, it is its business to cultivate deep-seated and effective habits of discriminating tested beliefs...and to ingrain into the individual’s working habits methods of inquiry and reasoning appropriate to the various problems that present themselves’ (pp. 27–28). Dewey claimed that unless one had such attitudes and habits, she or he was not intellectually educated. For Dewey, the main office of education is to supply conditions that make for their cultivation. Philosophical inquiry helps to clarify and augment responses to issues and concerns on the religious moral and spiritual dimensions of education. As Jeff Astley (1994) writes, ‘Philosophy as a method is primarily an attempt to think clearly: to clarify concepts and to examine arguments’ (p. 2).

Sound educational practice is grounded on the foundation of theory either intentionally or unintentionally. And good theories of education are clearly thought through and empirically grounded. While some would argue that there are teachers who can come to teach very effectively without ever being consciously aware of what they are doing, this is accidental. Teachers who do not understand the models on which their methods are based, are confined to doing what their unexamined habits direct them to do. Thus, they are not the authors of their actions. Marc Belth (1965) asserts that if teachers are to comprehend the grounds for their

work in order to improve the relationship between act and intention, and recognise consistency and adequacy in their teaching, they must study the models on which their actions or methods are based. He points out that to study models is to raise the educating act to the level of theoretical inquiry and to make it possible to improve action by deliberative study (pp. 168–169). As Astley reminds, philosophy is a method of thinking...applied to a particular range of issues and problems (p. 21).

The topics treated in this section are philosophically interesting, and they deal with issues related to the substantive content of the educational process. The section is divided into four parts. Part one addresses some philosophical perspectives on religious education. Part two presents certain feminist concerns and contributions to the religious, moral, and spiritual dimensions of education. The third part contains essays on the educational significance of spirituality. The fourth section includes essays which highlight some emerging theoretical issues and critical concerns which have bearing on the religious, moral, and spiritual dimensions of education.

Part 1: Philosophical Perspectives on Religious Education

There are seven essays in this part which offer varying philosophical perspectives on religious education. The authors are from the United States, England, Latvia and New Zealand. The first essay, 'Ancient philosophy in religious education: Education as initiation into a way of life,' is written by John L. Elias who is from the United States. As one who has published numerous works on various aspects of the philosophy of education, he draws from a rich palette. Elias suggests that the west has witnessed a continuing separation of philosophy from religion, and knowledge from faith. The result is that philosophy is now primarily viewed as a discipline committed to understanding the world in rational and secular terms. Because education in general and religious education in particular has been greatly influenced by this separation, many of religious education's aims are restricted to explanation and understanding. His essay explores the thesis that religious education can benefit from a retrieval of the ancient view of philosophy which invites persons into a spiritual way of life. The essay, 'Christian education and the reconstruction of Christian faith,' by John Hull, attempts to grasp the dilemma that religious and economic globalization presents to Christian educators regarding how to hold an adequate and appropriate self-understanding. The author employs a combination of theological assertion and historical interpretation, commencing with a series of theological fundamentals springing from faith in God as living God of Christian tradition.

In discussing the tension between religion and the nation-state in the modern era, Gabriel Moran discusses how today's religious education has to include dialogue both with other religions and with secular political powers. In his essay, 'Religious education and the nation-state,' he posits that a religious group has to work with its own members to sustain an appropriate tension with the nation-state.

Yet another dilemma is explored in the essay by Joanmarie Smith. In her piece, ‘The dilemma of pluralism,’ she draws attention to an alternative theory of truth between certitude and relativism. She describes an approach to teaching which can resolve the dilemma of either claiming that truth is not known in the way it is usually used—the correspondence theory—or that there is no truth in that sense.

Closely related to which truth is to be taught is the question of why something should be taught, i.e., how relevant it is. Gary Finlay asks the question, what is meant by ‘relevant’ in the context of Catholic schools in particular, or schools of other religious traditions in general. He cites the concept of the Maori people of New Zealand named *turangawaewae* which literally means ‘a standing place for the feet’ and refers to the sense of place and security given to Maori by their sharing in ancestral rights. Similarly, Finlay argues, students deserve to be taught ‘where they stand,’ and while the immediate experience of students should be considered, schools should find a balance in which there will be place for the deliberate and judicious attempt to pass on the tradition of their religious bodies.

Based on the premise that we confront increasing moral plurality and ambiguity in our lives and world today, Harold Horell argues for a more expansive and holistic understanding of morality, moral education, and Christian moral education. His essay, ‘The moral demands of contemporary life and Christian moral education’ explores contemporary moral experience; the personal, social and global/environmental horizons of ethical thought and action; the dynamics of moral development; and questions about the distinctiveness of Christian moral perspectives. In light of these foundational considerations, an approach for Christian moral education is offered.

The final essay in this part considers the contributions of the contemporary U.S. philosopher, Ken Wilber, and his possible contributions to religious education. Writing from the eastern European country of Latvia, Anta Filipsons sketches the key elements of Wilber’s integral approach to philosophy, cultural studies, psychology, and spirituality. She proposes to offer an introduction into the heart of Wilber’s theory—the four-quadrant framework—and suggests some of its application to the process of religious education. Although her essay engages only one model of religious education, Filipsons suggests that the conversation can and should expand much further. As well, she posits that Wilber’s framework can become a common metatheoretical foundation for various educational models and methods.

Part 2: Feminist Concerns and Contributions

Some would argue that feminism is the most sweeping revolution of the last half century because it is part of the fabric of injustices toward all minority groups. Yet, the depth of its implications is still being probed. As in all social justice issues and movements, the experience of working at it has gradually clarified and deepened the issues. Using a feminist lens, the four authors in this section propose ways in which the theory and practice of religious education can be enhanced by feminist principles. Two of the authors write from their experience of being citizens of the

United States, one as a native of Kenya who is currently teaching in the US, and the other from Eastern Europe as a scholar teaching in a Latvian university. All four draw from feminist principles which challenge fundamental assumptions, forged out of the Enlightenment, about how knowledge is obtained and shaped. Their essays illustrate why religious educators should be aware of the biases introduced by a too easy acceptance of conventional categories and models. These authors agree that a feminist appropriation of any philosophical system or educational theory will be creative, i.e., active, critical, and imaginative. It will be open to new ways of thinking but will take nothing on authority; and it will insist on testing every hypothesis by reference to the immediate experience of women (cf. Durka, 1982; 1991).

In her essay, 'Dialogue to truth in bell hooks and Jane Roland Martin,' Florence Namulundah unpacks how the theories of both scholars demonstrate an inextricable link between abstract thought and students' lived experiences; academic pursuit and creating a just society; individual interests and social concerns. Although hooks and Martin do not employ explicit religious language, Namulundah points out that there is a moral ethic evident in their treatises that affirms the individual albeit not at the expense of the larger community, and an intellectual pursuit that integrates the affective. She concludes her essay with a consideration of the centrality of teachers in students' cognitive and character development. Latvian scholar Dzintra Ilisko explores 'Ecofeminism—a healing perspective for reshaping religious education.' She draws on several ecofeminist theologians who reinterpret classical teachings regarding God and the world while reinterpreting them from a feminist perspective. Ilisko proposes challenges to religious education, and applies principles and insights from ecofeminist theological thought for reshaping religious education.

The second half of this section contains essays on the impact of two women who have made monumental contributions to the theory and practice of religious education. A self-proclaimed feminist, Maria Harris' work embodied much of what feminism promises, most especially critical thinking alongside a rich imagination. Aileen Giannelli uses three lenses to examine Harris' work: the rhythm of teaching and learning, the nature of knowing, and the creating of community. Each of these lenses have been central themes in feminist pedagogy. But there are those women educators who, while not proclaiming themselves to be feminists, nevertheless embody essential characteristics of feminist pedagogy. Sophia Lyon Fahs was such an educator who re-examined and revised theological understandings, and who embraced an ongoing process of critical reconstruction of philosophy of religious education. Her courage and willingness to venture into new realms of experimental methods were grounded in an active imagination. Her contributions to the religious education enterprise are unfolded in the essay by Lucinda Nolan.

Part 3: Essays on the Educational Significance of Spirituality

The search for a relevant and meaningful spirituality in the new millennium is shared by people from diverse parts of the globe as seen in the essays in this section. Scholars from Australia, Canada, and Europe address aspects of the educational

significance of spirituality. Joyce Bellous shows how faith operates in human lives by exploring conceptual relationships among the terms faith, spirituality, and education. She proposes that from the point of view of Christian education, spirituality provides the opportunity to know God, and that educators are called to nurture this potential in the life of every ordinary person.

Most teachers are very aware of the difficulties involved in socialising young and old into the traditions of a religious body in an era of cultural and religious pluralism. The essay of Australian religious educator Graham Rossiter invites teachers to subject their models and methods of spirituality to critical examination. He offers suggestions of how to avoid eclecticism which masks intellectual confusion. The essay concludes with a scheme for the appraisal of the appropriateness of any particular offering labeled as spirituality. The essay which follows is also written by an Australian scholar. David Tacey probes 'Spirituality as a bridge to religion and faith.' He explores spirituality, which is about the personal experience of the sacred, as a vital and necessary bridge upon which lives can be reconnected with the traditional sources of wisdom known as 'religion.' The chapter by Inga Belousa of Latvia introduces a theoretical framework of spirituality as a pedagogical category that includes three aspects: existential, social and ultimate. The existential aspect explains a dimension of human reality either inherently possessed or given by God at birth. It reveals spirituality as a quality of essential need and experience of human nature. The social aspect describes a dimension of human reality that is attained and shaped by a variety of spheres such as education, culture, religion, and philosophy. The ultimate aspect expresses the transcendent nature of human being and the engagement in virtuous behaviors such as awareness, openness, connectedness, service, and harmony. It is manifested as an integration of the immanent and the transcendent.

Part 4: Emerging Issues and Critical Concerns

Theoretical inquiry addresses the issues of meaning and vision. The essays in this section draw upon some subjects which can help teachers to better understand some of the various powers and spheres of life that are emerging under globalising conditions. Each of the essays relate these issues and concerns to how educators could guide their responses to the complex reality of postmodern life. Challenges facing religious educators who work with Africans and Hispanics are especially addressed by Roseanne McDougall and Jorge Diez respectively. McDougall explicates the inherently religious dimensions of 'Sankofa,' a twenty-first century re-appropriation of indigenous education. It is an integral component of such an African philosophy of education which serves to reconnect West Africans with a deeper sense of their inherently religious consciousness. The article describes 'Sankofa' as an intermediate stage in the development of an African educational philosophy. As such, it offers valuable insight to non-African educators. At the same time, it is acknowledged that only an African would be truly in a position to contribute a perspective on more recent advances in African educational philosophy.

Born and raised in Colombia, South America, Jorge Diez writes from his perspective as a religious educator in a United States multicultural adult Latino community. He presents an augmentative pedagogy derived from the integration of several educational theories. He argues that the principal theoretical objective of this approach is to transcend the limits placed by theory so as to adapt theoretical principles in a way that can be translated into practical opportunities.

The urgency of peace education as a dimension of religious education is presented by Linda Baratte. She suggests that peacemaking requires religious educators to probe the ethical re-evaluation of war by critically analysing the works of modern theologians, moral philosophers and social thinkers. This process implies making accessible competing ethical claims, and an exploration of peace through positive appreciation of other religious traditions and their potential to be religious sources of peaceful transformation. The essay is replete with carefully nuanced evaluations of available educational resources for teaching peace and justice.

The section ends with a final essay in part four that examines the dilemma of how to preserve religious heritage while nurturing religious development within the Christian Orthodox tradition. In his overview of Orthodox Christian religious education, Anton Vrame names what such a task entails and notes that the foundational questions are the same for any religious body. The particular application of these answers will be unique to each religious body. For those engaged in Orthodox education, he suggests that the answer to Orthodox education be located in the icon of the living Christ, the artistic *parakatatheke* of the Orthodox tradition, which is handed forward to each person in the life of the community.

The essays in this section have the qualities of *pentimento*, i.e., a process of making visible that which has been painted over. By painstakingly scrutinizing and critiquing various facets of philosophical and theoretical issues on the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education, it is hoped that the authors have helped to make visible for the readers, richer and wider aspects of foundational issues in education.

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ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: EDUCATION AS INITIATION INTO A WAY OF LIFE

John L. Elias

Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, Fordham University, USA

Introduction

Asked to write a paper on philosophy of religious education, I have pondered long and hard the complexity of the task. The first confusion, not easy to dispel, is with the word philosophy itself. Philosophy is not a univocal word since it means different things to its many practitioners. Western philosophy, which will be the focus of this paper, began as an attempt to go beyond the Greek poets in explaining the world and directing people's lives. Thus philosophy has always had a connection with education. It has also had for centuries a close connection with religion. My pondering the role of philosophy in religious education led me to review a life long study of philosophers and philosophies. In this review I will note how other religious educators have drawn on philosophy for their work. Next I will explain some of the main thrusts of ancient Greek philosophy. Finally, I will draw implications for theory and practice of religious education.

My introduction to philosophy came as a seminary student who was required to study philosophy for two years before beginning the study of theology. The philosophy of Neo-Scholasticism or Neo-Thomism, a modern version of the philosophy of the 13th century Dominican friar Thomas Aquinas, was to serve as *ancilla theologiae*, the handmaid of Scholastic theology. In studying the modern interpreters of St. Thomas and other 13th century philosophers the subjects were logic, epistemology, ontology or metaphysics, theodicy, philosophical psychology and ethics. The approach was rational, at times close to the reasoning and proofs one finds in mathematics. The most interesting course for me, however, was history of philosophy in which I was introduced in a year long course to the most prominent philosophers of the West. Each philosopher was critiqued according to how he (they were all men) agreed with or departed from the one true philosophy, which

was Neo-Scholasticism. I tired of the commentators on Thomas Aquinas and started to read his writings for myself, even using them in my examinations, to the consternation of some of my professors.

Though Neo-Thomism was once a great force in Catholic circles philosophising about education, notably the work of Jacques Maritain (1943), little scholarship in this tradition is carried on today, even though vibrant forms of Thomism have emerged in the last half of the twentieth century with the work of Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan (Elias, 1999). The anti-metaphysical thrust brought into modern philosophy by David Hume and others did much to blunt the influence of all forms of Thomism.

In the sixties I came to question the rigidity of Neo-Scholasticism and avidly read the existentialists, especially Albert Camus, Jean Paul Sartre, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Buber, Soren Kierkegaard, and Karl Jaspers. Some of these put their philosophies into narrative form which made reading them a more engaging enterprise. The plays of Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett were also valuable for conveying the mood and main thrust of this philosophy. These between-the wars-philosophers of contingency, absurdity, existential angst, and relationships spoke both to me and the tumultuous times in which we were living.

Michael Grimmitt (1973) successfully mined this tradition in presenting an approach to religious education that focused on existential and depth themes. Various religious educators, both Christian and Jewish, have found in Martin Buber's writings an approach to religious education that touches on many existential themes (Hill, 1973). Though not a religious educator, Maxine Greene (1967; 1973) for years dialogued with these philosophers to reflect creatively upon many aspects of education.

At graduate school in the seventies I studied various forms of analytic philosophy. The rigor of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gilbert Ryle, and John Wisdom, and the philosophers who utilised their works to reinvigorate the field of philosophy of education reminded me of the scholasticism of my college years. The analysis of language, concepts, slogans, metaphors, arguments and policies of these analysts provoked many lively discussions and classes. However, when it came to doing a dissertation I did not employ this approach but did a more traditional comparative and critical interpretation of the radical educational reformers Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich (Elias, 1976). These men, while certainly philosophers, were also social critics, political theorists, and educators.

A form of language analysis has been one of the principal tools Gabriel Moran has used to probe many issues in religious education, though one finds in his writings other philosophical stances, notably neo-progressivism. Charles Melchert (1974; 1978), Randolph Crump Miller (1970), and John Hull (1984) have also made use of forms of language analysis. The most recent work in this field is the carefully crafted philosophy of religious education of Jeffrey Ashley (1994) who draws on educators in Britain and the United States.

Graduate school also introduced me to a third contemporary philosophy, American pragmatism. I devoured John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1917)

and went on to read many of his works and have followed the still continuing debate over his ideas and influence. The pragmatism of Dewey and William James influenced me in many of my writings. Dewey figured prominently in my *Philosophy of Education* (1995), where it served as a bridge between the ancients and contemporary philosophers of education. Past issues of *Religious Education* have included many attempts to interpret religious education from a Deweyan perspective. The classic works in this area are those of George Coe (1918) and Sophia Fahs (1952).

My thesis on Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich made me take seriously the philosophical dimensions of Marxist thought and phenomenology (Elias 1976; 1994). Through them I also made contact with the critical social theory of the Frankfurt school. The most successful attempt to bring this approach to bear on religious education remains Thomas Groome's *Christian Religious Education* (1980). Michael Warren (1997) has also drawn on this thought for his criticisms of modern media and communications.

While teaching graduate courses in theology and theories of religious education I was attracted to the efforts of process philosophers to present a more dynamic approach to religious education (Durka & Smith, 1976; Moore, 1998). My interest in this form of philosophy was never strong since I had become disenchanted with all forms of absolutist metaphysics.

In more recent years I have grappled with various postmodernist philosophers and have recently written a chapter on the relevance of this thought to philosophy of adult education. Harold Horell (2003), my colleague at Fordham University, has fruitfully drawn some implications of postmodernist writers for religious education.

Reflecting thus far on religious education I have drawn over the years on a number of philosophical traditions. In doing so I am in the company of religious educators who have and do utilise these approaches. But I prefer in this piece to draw on ancient Greek philosophy because I believe that it may speak to the essential nature of what religious education, an invitation to embrace a particular way of life. Recent philosophies are an attempt to present or analyse a world view by probing human consciousness, language, culture. Religious education, however, is not primarily or essentially introducing people into a system of thought; it is rather an attempt to initiate and confirm students in a way of life.

Philosophy as a Way of Life

The ancients Greeks viewed philosophy as more than theoretical discourses or systems of thought. They were interested in philosophical modes of life, and spiritual phenomena. There is a certain advantage to going back to the origins of Western philosophy to see how the original thrust in philosophy developed. The ancient philosophers produced great theoretical works but almost always within the perspective of promoting and initiating others into a defined life. Philosophy was

an invitation to make an existential choice, a choice to be made not in solitude but in the context of a community. For the ancients:

the philosophical school corresponds, above all, to the choice of a certain way of life and existential option which demands from the individual a total change of lifestyle, a conversion of one's entire being, and ultimately a certain desire to be and to live in a certain way (Hadot, 2002, p. 3).

While this choice obviously entails acceptance of and commitment to a theory or vision of the world, its ultimate purpose is the adoption of a particular way of life in company with others. At the heart of the philosophical task of ancient philosophy was the effort to engage disciples in spiritual exercises that may include diet, discourse, dialogue, meditation, and contemplation (Hadot, 2002, p. 6).

Philosophy for the ancient Greek philosophers was a process and program of self-transformation. Hadot's thesis (2002) presents various steps in this self-transformation or conversion. Those who would be philosophers made an existential choice, a conversion from ordinary life to a life according to a particular philosophy. The would-be philosopher joined a particular school to learn and engage in the discourse and processes by which this transformation was fostered. Disciples then studied the physics, metaphysics and ethical theory that supported this particular philosophy. All the while disciples engaged in the spiritual exercises that fostered this world view and led to a fuller understanding of themselves. Through these discourses, study, and spiritual exercises disciples were transformed. Once transformed, disciples engaged others in order to encourage and aid them in making existential choices and further their transformation.

While the full approach to philosophy as a way of life is found in the Hellenistic schools of Epicureanism and Stoicism, important elements of this approach are also found in earlier philosophies. Plato founded the Academy as an intellectual and spiritual community designed to form human beings. For him philosophy was best carried out in a school by a community of life and dialogues among masters and disciples. Other ancient philosophers followed Plato in educating disciples in a community.

While Plato's ultimate goal of education in his Academy was to educate for the transformation of the republic, this was to be achieved through an intellectual and spiritual community in which individuals first of all sought their own self-transformation. Life in the ideal community of the Academy was to inspire disciples to work for creating the ideal city. This philosophical education meant purifying the mind in order to liberate the soul to live the good life. Platonic education consisted first of all of mathematics followed by dialectics. Both of these subjects were viewed as means of self-transcendence. The abstractness of mathematics and the rationality and universality of dialogue enable learners to move beyond ordinary understanding. At times dialogue would lead participants to the very limits of language by revealing to them their inability to express what they experienced in their moral and spiritual existence. Knowledge gathered through dialogue was not merely theoretical but a virtuous transformation of persons. Whitehead has noted that 'the idea of pure

knowledge, or of pure understanding was completely foreign to Plato's thought. The age of the Professors had not yet come' (in Hadot, 2002, p. 70).

Spiritual exercises in Plato's Academy included the practice of death described in the *Phaedo* and the practice of transcending all mundane matters described in the *Theaetetus*. Plato recommended meditation for controlling desire and anger as well as for remaining calm in times of misfortune. Using the death of Socrates as an example Plato counseled that a person who has spent life philosophising does not fear death because philosophy frees mind from body, controls unruly passions, and enables the soul to soar above mundane matters. For Plato the soul of the philosopher who has elevated thought and contemplated the totality of time and being 'will therefore not look on death as something terrible' (*Republic*, 486 a–b).

What we know about Socrates, Plato's master, we learn mainly from the dialogues of Plato. Socrates has often been compared to Jesus in his life and teachings. Though neither wrote anything and gathered only a small group of disciples, they have had immense influence on generations after them. Like Jesus Socrates was interested in arriving at truth and often used questioning as a method for doing this. Both tried to get people to understand their true selves. Like Jesus Socrates was more interested in what people were than in what they possessed:

I have no concern at all for what most people are concerned with: financial affairs, administration of property, appointments to generalships, oratorical triumphs in public, magistracies, coalitions, political factions. I did not take this path...but rather the one where I could do the most good to each one of you in particular, by persuading you to be less concerned with what you have than with what you are...so that you may make yourselves as excellent and as rational as possible (*Apologia* in Hadot, 2002, p. 35).

Socrates was interested in values as well as knowledge, in action as well as in thought, in care of the self as well as care of the city. Though Socrates did not start a school of his own like Plato, Aristotle and others, he has over the centuries been the exemplar of what a philosopher should be: one who cares deeply for the souls of others. He has provided a description of philosophy that runs through ancient philosophy, a manner of being, communicated through dialogue. In the *Apologia*, he stated that

It does not seem human for me to have neglected all my own affairs and to have kept neglecting my own affairs for so many years now, and always to concern myself with your interests, giving up to each one of you individually like a father or an elder brother and persuading you to care for virtue (in Hadot, 2002, p. 38).

At first sight it does not appear that Aristotle's Lyceum meets all the requirements of a school of philosophy that intends to educate disciples into a philosophic way of life, emphasising as Aristotle did intellectual powers and pursuits. Yet it seems clear that Aristotle is also interested in philosophy as a form of self-transformation, which

he calls *theoria* or contemplation. *Theoria* is a god-like goal to be achieved through intellectual pursuits in the context of a community in which this ideal is lived out as fully as possible. In contrast to Plato's rational dialectics, Aristotle's program of research and studies emphasised empirical investigations through which one ultimately reaches the divine, which is the cause of earthly phenomena. It is through this contemplation that disciples are transformed, though Aristotle admits that our efforts are often more a searching than attaining the final goal of contemplative happiness. One does not find in Aristotle's Lyceum the spiritual exercises present in other schools unless study, investigation, and contemplation satisfied the spiritual quest of students, as they probably did. Also, political education does not play the same role in the Lyceum as it did in Plato's Academy. Aristotle directed his political treatises at citizens and leaders, for he believed that it was the task of politicians to provide the situation in which citizens can learn. For Aristotle philosophers were to influence life in the city by teaching politicians rather than through becoming rulers themselves, as Plato advocated. For Aristotle the ultimate goal of life was to live the life of the gods by striving for happiness, to be achieved through the contemplative or philosophic life. The life of the mind is an end in itself to be sought and loved for itself and not for utilitarian purposes. John Dewey in his *Democracy and education* criticised this approach to education as elitist.

By the end of the fourth century B.C. there were four schools in Athens. Besides Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum there was also the school of the Stoics who met on a *stoa* or porch, and the school of the Epicureanism, named after Epicurus, which met in a garden. These schools lasted for about three centuries. Stoicism became a powerful philosophy in the Roman Empire and was embraced by Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, and Cicero. The Stoics and the Epicureans joined the earlier philosophers in establishing schools as communities in which disciples shared a way of life for attaining shared spiritual goals. The theories of these school supported spiritual transformation of disciples, since like the earlier schools, these schools had goals of self-transformation. For the Epicureans the goal was a life of stable pleasure achieved by limiting one's appetites while for the Stoics the goal was a life of self-coherence. Each school had its own spiritual exercises for guiding disciples in reaching these goals. The priority in these schools, as in the Academy and Lyceum, was a commitment to a certain kind of wisdom or way of life.

The four schools were basically similar in their teaching methods, using some form of the Socratic method. Life in the city demanded mastery of speech through rhetoric, dialectics and dialogue. Questions were asked such as 'Is death an evil? Is pleasure the supreme good?' While in the early period the dialogue was an end in itself, as we learn from the Platonic dialogues, in the later period the master made dogmatic comments on the question or thesis. Alexander of Aphrodisias noted

This form of discourse (discussion of questions) was customary among the ancients, and this was how they gave most of their classes: not by commenting on books, as is done now (at that time, there were no books of any kind), but

by arguing for or against a thesis once it was proposed, in order to exercise their faculty of inventing arguments, basing themselves in premises admitted by everyone (in Hadot, 2002, p. 104).

Cicero added a note of realism when he complained that for him Stoic teaching at times reduced the student to giving yes-or-no answers and thus students 'are not transformed in their soul and go away as they had come. For although the thoughts which the Stoics express may be true and sublime, they do not treat them as they should, but do so in a rather dry manner' (*On the ends of good and evil*, IV, 3, 7).

The Epicurean approach to education was more deductive in that it started out with principles and not questions. Disciples were to memorise very brief sayings and eventually compile a list of chief beliefs, armed with which they could approach the more advanced books of Epicurean writers. Eventually Stoic philosophers also presented their teachings in a rigorously systematic and logical order. These sayings were thought to produce an effect on the souls of the listeners or readers. Such teachings were to lead to vital choices by the learners. Discussions were always included in this mode of learning. It should be noted that while only the elite attended the schools of Plato and Aristotle the schools of Stoics and Epicureans were open to all, rich and poor, male and female, free citizens and slaves. The concept of philosophy was thus popularised since 'whoever adopted the Epicurean or Stoic way of life and put it into practice would be considered a philosopher, even if he or she did not develop a philosophical discourse, either written or oral' (Hadot, 2002, p. 108).

At the heart of Epicureanism was a way of life that dealt with pleasure and pain. The Epicurean task was to deliver persons from suffering and allow them to experience pleasure in a reasonable way, seeking the pure pleasure of existence. The Epicurean philosopher tended to the sickness of the soul. People were taught to control suffering and attain pleasure by moderating their desire for wealth, luxury, and power. The ascetic life consisted in suppressing desires that are neither natural nor necessary, limiting pleasures that are natural but not necessary, and avoiding pleasures that are neither natural nor necessary. Part of Epicurean teaching was removing fear of gods and death; the gods are not concerned with life on earth; since there is no life after death there is nothing to fear.

The spiritual exercises of Epicureans included meditation both by oneself and with companions, and recognising that death is actually nothing for us. Disciples were also to exercise the discipline of desire, being satisfied with simple foods and clothes, renouncing wealth and honors. The Epicurean philosopher was like a spiritual director who guided people through the sufferings and pleasures of life. For the Epicureans the supreme pleasure was contemplating the infinity of the universe and the majesty of the deity. Other pleasures included discussion, friendship, and life in common, including both slaves and women. Meditation on death was extremely important since many viewed it as the ultimate suffering. Epicurus recommended: 'Persuade yourself that each new day that dawns will be your last; then you will receive each unexpected hour with gratitude. Recognise

the value of each moment of time which is added on as if it were happening by an incredible stroke of luck' (in Hadot, 2002, p. 126).

Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school was praised for the education he gave to young people, the remarkable life he led, as well as the harmony between his life and his teachings. Stoic schools in Greece were very influential in educating ordinary citizens and leaders. As noted earlier, prominent Romans who studied in Athens, developed Stoic philosophy and embraced the Stoic way of life.

Stoics believed that the only evil in the world is moral evil and that there is no good but moral good, which they called duty or virtue. The existential choice to be made by Stoics was not for pleasure but for the demands of the good, which are known by reason and which transcend the individual. Humans exist in a tragic situation which is determined by fate, that is by forces outside ourselves that we cannot change. Though we cannot change things, with our freedom and reason we can change our attitude towards them and thus achieve peace, happiness and coherence. Through our moral intention we can give meaning to events. To overcome the unhappiness that this situation brings one must live and act in accordance with reason. In living this way we can find freedom, independence and coherence within ourselves. This is Stoic advice for living: 'Do not try to make things happen the way you want, but want what happens to happen the way it happens, and you will be happy' (in Hadot, 2002, p. 133).

In ethics the Stoics emphasised duties or appropriate actions which depend partly on us and partly on fate. This is the only way we can deal with the uncertainty of daily life, living under reserve, that is if Fate permits. Since we cannot be absolutely certain we are doing the right thing, what counts in the end is the intention of doing good. This, however, should be no deterrent to participation in a disinterested manner in social and political life for service of the human community. The Roman Seneca explained that:

No school has more goodness and gentleness; none has more love for mankind or is more devoted to the common good. The goal it assigns for us is to be useful, to help others, and to take care not only of ourselves but of everyone in general and of each person in particular (*On clemency*, II, 3, 3).

The spiritual exercises of the Stoics are not as well known as those of the Epicureans since fewer of their early writings are available to us. The practice of logic as applied to everyday life was an important exercise. Contemplation of the essence of objects was another practice. Stoics were to recognise themselves as part of the Whole by elevating themselves to cosmic consciousness through meditation. They were also to recognise that all things are in a process of change. Meditation on death focuses on it as a fundamental law of universal order. Stoics were also to practice 'pre-exercise' or 'pre-meditation' of evils that we anticipate we might have to bear. This was to be done not only to prepare us to face these realities but also to bring us into contact with cosmic reality. Meditating on death makes us face each moment and each action as if it were the last. Thus for Stoics philosophy is a practice that entails a fundamental attitude towards all aspects of life. One's theory

of the universe has bearing on all of one's actions. To live philosophically is to live in union with nature and reason and in accordance with Fate.

Some changes took place in philosophy during the years of the Roman Empire. Platonism became the dominant philosophy of late antiquity with the decline of Epicureanism and Stoicism. Pedagogy also changed in that philosophy was then taught through reading and explanation of the texts of the school's founders. Teachers also wrote commentaries on these texts to help the students learn. Texts were taught in an order that would promote students' spiritual development. Students first studied the ethical texts of Plato, which would promote their purification. They then studied texts dealing with the physical world in order to learn to transcend the limitations of this world. Lastly, they studied metaphysical or theological texts in order to ascend to the contemplation of God. Reading these texts was considered a spiritual exercise 'because the reading of each philosophical text was supposed to produce a transformation in the person reading or listening to the commentary' (Hadot, 2002, p. 155). Teachers of philosophy thus became directors of conscience who cared for the spiritual development of their students. The final goal of Stoic education was developing closeness and union with the supreme deity.

The tradition of philosophy as a way of life is no longer a major orientation in philosophy though it has reappeared in the history of philosophy in some of the writings of Erasmus, Montaigne, and Descartes. It would appear that since the early medieval period religions took over this task of conveying a way of life. Christianity adopted many of the emphases of ancient philosophy as one sees especially in monastic culture (LeClerq, 1959). Philosophy went its own way to emphasise rational analysis, beginning with the scholasticism of the medieval universities. Philosophy increasingly focused on the intellectual life and ignored the practical life, the life of experience. To remedy this situation a new journal had to be started dedicated to philosophy and public affairs. Today we have arrived at the point where many tensions exist between religion and philosophy. Religion is a matter of faith and philosophy is a matter of reason. Some philosophers have manifested an opposition to religion while some forms of religion consider philosophy harmful to religious faith.

Religious Education and Philosophy as a Way of Life

Education, especially religious education, has been caught in these tensions between philosophy and religion. This is especially true with regard to philosophy of religious education. Religion is about fostering a way of life. For the most part modern philosophies have abandoned this task and now emphasise rational analysis, language and textual analysis, intellectual understanding, argumentation, and proofs. The risk with modern philosophy is that it might be so concerned with texts that it does not get to explaining what the texts mean for life. The same can happen with religion, even though the philosophical approach in religion and education have added to our understanding of these enterprises. However, there is a danger that

those who teach religion may embrace these useful methods and forget that these methods are secondary to the primary purpose of religious education: to convey and confirm people in a way of life. A reflection upon ancient philosophy may provide a helpful way of reinforcing this primary focus of religious education. I will draw some conclusions for the theory and practice of religious education from this short survey of ancient philosophy. These are well known truths and for that reason cannot be brought to the fore too often.

The Value of Philosophy

I have always felt that philosophy is a valuable resource for religious education, notwithstanding the tensions that exist between religion and philosophy. Ancient philosophy is especially close to both religion and education. Both philosophy and religion ask the basic questions about human existence. Although some philosophies are inimical to religious faith, this need not be the case. Philosophy need not undermine religious faith, as this study of ancient philosophy has shown.

The value of philosophy for religious faith can be shown by examining carefully the most famous philosophical imperative. Even those outside the sphere of philosophy know the imperative of Socrates: 'Know thyself.' This expression is usually taken to highlight the importance of self-examination and self-knowledge. Yet the version of this imperative found in Plato's *Charmides* takes a slightly different form, it states: Know thyself, *mortal* (emphasis added). The meaning here is, according to Claire Elise Katz (2004), is an imperative to know one's boundaries and limitations. This clearly gives a religious and moral meaning to the expression, a pointed warning against pride and arrogance, what the Greeks called *hubris*, a fatal flaw for many humans that may lead to their undoing and even destruction.

Ancient philosophy, in fact all true philosophy, is not just about reading prescribed texts; it is about reading the texts of our lives in the light of the philosophical texts. There is a tendency in both philosophy and religion to centre exclusively on the text and not to examine what the text means for daily life. Ancient philosophy tried in a valiant manner to give proper emphasis on the meaning of the text and its meaning for human lives.

Religion as a Way of Life

The religions of the world have as their fundamental task to present before their adherents a way of life, not dogmas to be believed or rituals to be performed. The prophets of all religions inveighed against both dogmatism and ritualism. The Torah, Gospels, Koran and other religious literature summon believers to commit themselves to a certain way of living which is spelled out in this literature. This way of life often consists of following or imitating the life of the founder or other

important personages in the religious tradition. For sure religion can be studied in an academic manner and many benefits have come from this study. Yet there is a danger that those who are involved in this type of study may slight the more essential focus on religion as a way of life. Certainly religion can be studied by those who neither profess or accept its teachings nor participate in its rituals. There is a legitimate and beneficial place for the scientific study of religion. But the nature of religion as a way of life should not be lost upon those who teach it in a context of belief.

I have recognised during my many years of teaching religion in different situations that the context often dictates the stance that one takes towards the manner in which I teach religion. It is easier to approach religion as a way of life in the context of the home, church, and community than it is in the context of the school. Adults and children are more open to this approach than are young people who may be experiencing some difficulties in adhering to the beliefs into which they have been socialised or which they have been taught. Yet even in the context of teaching religion in classroom settings teachers need to be open to those moments when the text beckons to go beyond the level of instruction.

Orthopraxis as More Important than Orthodoxy

One of the fundamental tenets of theologies of liberation is the primacy of orthopraxis (right doing) over orthodoxy (right belief). While not denying or minimising the importance of beliefs and their effects upon our actions, the primacy of right actions should be maintained in teaching religion. Religions that place stress on creeds, dogmas, and other forms of authoritative teachings run the greater risk of reducing religion and the teaching of religion to a system of beliefs to be analysed and argued over. This repeats what happened in the later days of ancient philosophy when the study of the texts usurped the attention that should have been given to putting the philosophy into practice.

The Intimate Connection Between Beliefs and Life

Years ago as seminary student my friends and I noticed the lack of connection between our studies and our lives. Courses in theology, scripture, history, and law were taught without any explicit connections made to the life of faith. Our spiritual lives were to be tended to by one spiritual director who gave a talk each week, we could also speak to him privately, and we engaged in many spiritual exercises. However, no connection was ever made that I remember in the hundreds of hours in seminary classes to our religious and spiritual lives.

I think that this is also a danger when religion is taught in a school setting. Classes in religion and theology deal with our understanding of the faith while

campus or youth ministry attends to the life of faith. Perhaps this is what we can expect when religion becomes an academic subject.

The Value of Learning in Community

Being a philosopher in ancient times meant belonging to a community of learners, being in a relationship not only with a master but also with fellow learners. Philosophy was not a solitary, ivory tower enterprise as it is with many modern day philosophers and academics. Becoming a philosopher was not a matter of attending courses and receiving a certain number of credits. It was entering a way of life. This is also the best context for religious education. Of course, there is value in individual study, reflection and contemplation. But the value of a supportive, challenging community is manifest in sustaining purpose, providing role models, handling one's difficulties. When I think of the most effective religious education experiences in my life I think of homes in which we shared faith in our Lenten journeys, the meeting of Christian families, a weekend of education with Christian and Jewish educators, interactive retreats, study groups, conventions of scholars. The value of learning in a community is succinctly attested to in the rabbinic dictum: 'Much have I learned from my masters, more from my colleagues, but from my disciples most of all' (Crenshaw, 1998, p. 175).

Conclusion

This paper has provided an opportunity to review recent writings in the field of philosophy of religious education, as well as my own involvement for many years in this field. Many professional religious educators as well as practitioners come to their work with philosophical or theoretical positions. Professionals have made these explicit in their writings. Many approaches to philosophy can be found in these writings, each of which brings to the foreground some important dimensions of religious education.

In this paper I have reflected on this field of study by looking back at the beginnings of Western philosophy, with the approaches of Greek philosophers. Inspired by the work of Pierre Hadot this paper looks at these philosophers as presenting philosophy not primarily as a search for a meaningful world but rather as a search for a meaningful spiritual life. This approach to philosophy has not been a prevalent one among modern philosophers. But it is valuable for religious educators since it goes to the very heart of the enterprise, educating persons to be religious and spiritual in a particular way of life.

That such an education is basic and essential to human society is clear from a study of education in Judaism, one of the oldest world religions. The aim of this education was the formation of character through inculcating the virtues of self-control, restraint, eloquence, and honesty. These virtues were buttressed by religious faith and fear of the Lord. Religious educators are well reminded that

ancient wisdom in both Judaism and the Greek world connected education with the desire for order and continuity. In ancient times:

to combat the powerful and seductive lure of chaos in various forms, societal or personal, older and more experienced individuals tried their best to prevent the younger generation from falling into the pitfalls confronting them in the nooks and crannies of daily life (Crenshaw, 1998, p. 1).

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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

John M. Hull

The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education

Introduction

The history of Christianity presents certain problems to the Christian educator. The self-understanding of faith has passed through many revisions and development is particularly rapid during the present period of religious and economic globalisation. Christian consciousness carries forward the impressions left by earlier experiences, and the natural tendency to conserve tends to retard recognition of these impressions, making it difficult for religion to fulfil its responsibilities toward the contemporary world.

A major impression upon Christian faith has been left by 1700 years of residence within the political power, first of the Roman empire and then of successive European Christian empires. Since the modern missionary movement took place during the period of European and American ascendancy, those forms of Christian faith received by the evangelised countries carry the marks of this geo-political context. The task of disentangling Christian faith, which comes to modern people with these many layers of earlier interpretations, is complex, and demands criteria both historical, theological and ethical. The one who attempts such disentanglement also stands in a certain socio-political reality, and has to grapple with both conscious and unconscious vested interest. This demands a sophisticated theological approach to both false consciousness as a collective phenomenon and self-deception as a feature of individual life. Nevertheless, the legacy of faith and the suffering of the present world insist that the Christian educator make an effort in this direction. There is no pure essence of Christian faith. There is no simple, unmediated approach to the Bible. Naïvety only succeeds in landing us in a morass of unsuspected depths and leaves Christian faith without defence and without the analytic energy to tackle the problems of life and death today.

The present essay attempts to grasp this nettle through a combination of theological assertion and historical interpretation, commencing with a series of theological fundamentals springing from faith in God as the living God of Christian tradition.

Basic Orientations

The church is an instrument of Christian faith (Eph 3:10). The church is also part of Christian faith, since faith in the one, holy catholic and apostolic church is affirmed in the ancient creeds. However, when we are considering the role and prospects of a particular denomination, it is important to emphasise that the church as a whole (and therefore the particular, historic denominations as well) does not live unto itself but is an instrument to further the mission of Christian faith in the world (2 Cor 4:5). No specific denomination is essential to this task, and Christian faith will generate new movements from time to time to become new instruments of its own mission.

Christian faith is an instrument of the mission of God (Eph 3:9). It is not the only such instrument. In spite of its unique characteristics and value, Christian faith does not live to and for itself, but is to be judged by its faithfulness to the mission of God (Rom 11:21).

The mission of God is a mission of life for all human beings and for the whole creation (Gen 2:9; Deut 30:15; Ps 36:9; 103:4; John 1:4; 10:10; Tit 1:2). In scripture God is shown to be opposed to every force and structure which frustrates life (Ex 2:23–5; Rom 1:18; James 4:6). God is energetic in the pursuit of justice (Ps 9:8; Is 11:4; Luke 1:52–3). God tears down the oppression, exploitation, greed and pride which oppose the fulfilment of God's mission (Amos 5:21–4; Luke 11:20–2).

The special characteristic of the mission of God which found expression through Jesus was the inauguration of a community of inclusive love (Matt 5:43–4; Luke 7:36–50; John 13:34). Jesus declared that the mission of God was to establish the rule of God in his words and actions (Mark 1:14–5; Luke 11:20). As prophet (Matt 13:57), teacher (John 3:2) and Son of God (John 1:49) he opposed the social and physical distortions which were obstructing the appearance of the new community (Luke 6:6–10; 13:10–16). Faithful to the end, he sealed his witness with his blood (Mark 12:1–8; 14:24; Heb 13:20). The church flows from the life of Jesus (Acts 20:28; Rom 5:10), a life laid down and restored (John 10:15–17), and through the church the risen Christ continues his mission (Matt 28:20; John 15:1–2). The mission of the church is thus the same, by continuation, as that of Jesus Christ (Matt 16:18; John 20:21; 2 Cor 4:10), and the mission of Jesus is identical with, but not the only form (Amos 9:7; Mal 1:11; Acts 10:35) (Falk, 1985), of the mission of God (Matt 11:27; John 1:18).

In reflecting upon the God who is the ground and source of mission, the followers of Jesus affirmed faith in God as the one who sends the mission (Matt 10:40; Acts 10:38), faith in Jesus as the one who was sent (John 5:36), and faith in the

Holy Spirit who is the loving energy of the sending (Acts 2:33; 19:2–6). In this Trinitarian faith in the sender, the sent and the sending the church finds the ground of its hope (Matt 28:19–20; Rom 8:16–17). This hope is made actual insofar as the disciples of Jesus, formed into the church by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5), are becoming the symbol of the community of inclusive love, and thus remain faithful to the mission of the triune God (Eph 2:18).

The Mission in History

God acts through creating creativity (Hartshorne, 1967, p. 26). The world that God created is not a static reality, emerging complete and entire. Rather, it is a dynamic, evolving world which carries the stamp of its originator in its endless innovation, novelty and change. Thus the mission of God in promoting life must be mediated through the dynamics, structures and vicissitudes of life itself (Tillich, 1953, p. 162). By the same token, the meaning of the mission will be interpreted by human beings (1 Cor 13:12; 2 Cor 4:7), who are both the objects and the agents of the mission. This meaning will be distorted, misunderstood and contradicted. It will also be accepted, transformed and transforming.

The fulfilment of God's mission will be a renewed creation, when the liberty of the children of God will reach its glorious realisation, along with the renewal of the created order (Rom 8:21). This lies in the future. The God who originated the mission from the past is also the God who calls from the future (John 14:18; Rev 1:8).

Since the mission is a proclamation and a demand for justice it will be countered and opposed by injustice. The mission to actualise a community of universal love will be opposed by sectional interests and tribal loyalties (Erikson, 1975, pp. 176–179; 1982, p. 95). The mission to establish a community of inclusive love will be opposed by selection, hierarchy, the setting of boundaries and limits, the distinction between us and them (Nipkow, 2003, p. 193). The forces of opposition to God's mission are also dynamic, proactive, intelligent, forcing acceptance of their own will rather than the will of God (Rom 7:21–3; Eph 6:12), seeking life for themselves rather than life for all, building up structures, concentrated centres of hostility and opposition (Hinkelammert, 1986, pp. 125–126) just as the mission of God builds up structures and powers of the life of love.

The prophetic and apostolic mission of the church, the incarnated mission, will be subject to ambiguity and compromise (Hinkelammert, 1986, pp. 240–241). It will tend to be understood from the position in the life cycle (Fowler, 1981; Oser & Gmünder, 1991) and the place within the power structure (Metz, 1981; Hull, 1992) inhabited by those who seek to promote it. Moreover, those who benefit from the injustice in the world will not read the mission in the same way as those who suffer from the injustice (Lamb, 1982; Schüttke-Scherle, 1989). The meaning of the mission, which is the meaning of Christian faith and the nature of the church, has become part of social memory. It has passed through the distortions and deceptions which are typical of the way that societies remember (Connerton, 1989; Halbwachs,

1992; Werbner, 1998). Each national or linguistic or ethnic group that comes into contact with the mission will understand it experientially within the confines of its own historical and geo-political setting. In so far as the mission is made articulate in language and speech it will express the vested interests, the grammatical aggression by means of which each language subdues meaninglessness in the interests of those who are structured by that language (Foucault, 1972; Pêcheux, 1982; Derrida, 1998). Religion itself will be found on both sides of the antitheses created by the mission (Baum, 1975). There is no other way for the life of God to communicate with the spontaneous and developing character of created life than through these ambiguities.

The Mission of God and Christian Faith in Europe

Five hundred years of association with the European search for power have led to a huge expansion of Christian influence but have also seriously compromised the Christian tradition insofar as it is a witness to and an agent of the mission of God. Those who inherit the results of these centuries of collaboration and protest tend to understand Christian faith from within this context. The contamination exists both objectively in that it has taken place, and subjectively in the mental and spiritual lives of those who are its products (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; 1992). Those who have been shaped by the European tradition of Christian faith find it hard to recognise its distorted character. This would mean perceiving distortion within themselves, and that implies some contrast or antithesis which would render the distortion visible.

Moreover, the process is itself highly ambiguous. As this ambiguity is realised, attitudes towards it are necessarily ambivalent. We do not know what would have become of Britain (to take an example of one significant European country) within the context of aggressive international competition if the theology of God's special covenant with Britain had not given the peoples of these Western European islands a sense of identity, confidence and purpose in the world (Drinnon, 1980; Hughes and Allen, 1988). If Britain had not received its vigorous sense of identity and national destiny from Christian faith, perhaps it would have got it somewhere else with profound consequences both for Britain and for Christian faith in Europe and the world.

When we read how Frances Drake and his sailors on their voyage around the world, anchoring off the Pacific coast of North America, went ashore, and going down on their knees sang psalms whilst pointing to the sky in order to evangelise the group of native Californians who met them (Heizer, 1947), we do not know whether to groan with embarrassment at this early example of the arrogance with which Europeans have treated native cultures (Berkhofer, 1965; 1978; Swain and Rose, 1988; Tinker, 1993), or whether to admire the confidence and the courage which drove those isolated men in that tiny vessel across the unknown oceans of the world.

It is not our business to condemn previous generations, but it is our responsibility to understand ourselves in relation to them. The dramatic effects of Britain's

appropriation of Christian tradition in the service of its newly discovered national enterprise demand our attention.

When the colonisation of North America was being undertaken in the early decades of the seventeenth century, the passages of scripture which inspired the colonisers included Genesis 12:1 'Now the Lord said unto Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great' (Symonds, 1609), and Joshua 17:14–18 where the tribes of Joseph complained that too small a portion of land had been given them. Joshua told the tribes to go up into the land, cut down the forests, 'cast out the Canaanites' and possess the land (Gray, 1609). Here we find the seeds of that contempt for the so-called primitive and savage 'red Indians', an image of white supremacy and destiny which is still with us today.

By the end of the French wars of the early eighteenth century, Britain had emerged as a world power with a mission to spread political and economic enlightenment together with Christian civilisation around the globe.

We can trace that mission in the hymns of Isaac Watts (1674–1748), generally recognised as the most significant creator of the English hymn (Hull, 2002a; 2005) in whom the experiential theology of the Puritan tradition became the nationalistic theology of the Protestant empire. In translating the Psalms Watts wanted to address the present day experience of his congregation, including politics.

In Israel stood His ancient throne;
He loved that ancient race
But now he calls the world His own
And heathens taste his grace.
The British Islands are the Lord's,
There Abram's God is known,
While powers and princes,
Shields and swords submit before His throne (Watts, 1719, Psalm 47).

Shine, mighty God, on Britain shine
With beams of heavenly grace
Reveal thy power through all our coasts
And show thy smiling face.
Earth shall obey her maker's will
And yield a full increase;
Our God will crown his chosen isle
With fruitfulness and peace (Watts, 1719, Psalm 67).

The heathens know thy glory Lord,
The wondering nations read thy word,
In Britain is Jehovah known,

Our worship shall no more be paid
 To gods which mortal hands have made;
 Our maker is our God alone (Watts, 1719, Psalm 96).

He sits upon the eternal hills,
 With grace and pardon in his hands
 And sends his covenant with the seals,
 To bless the distant British lands (Watts, 1782, I, no. 52).

Ye British isles who read His love
 In long epistles from above,
 (He hath not sent his sacred word
 To every land) praise ye the Lord! (Watts, 1782, II, no. 53)

This northern isle, our native land,
 lies safe in the Almighty's hand
 Our foes of victory dream in vain,
 And wear the captivating chain.
 He builds and guards the British throne
 And makes it gracious like his own;
 Makes our successive princes kind
 And gives our dangers to the wind (Watts, 1782, II, no. 1).

It is a striking fact that in the approximately six hundred hymns written by Isaac Watts, some twenty of which remain in the repertoire, there is hardly one dealing with the service of the church to the community and the world in any other way other than spiritual and material domination. In these hymns, the congregation has become a world unto itself. Everything is reduced to worship. Indeed, there is nothing but doctrine and worship; the mission has been swallowed up by 'gospel', the repetitive celebration by the local congregation of its own intellectual and emotional life.

Between 1770 and 1850 the nation of commerce, agriculture and industry became the first capitalist country in the world (Macfie, 1967; Viner, 1972; Hirschman, 1977; Smith, 1993; 2002). The power of money, first located in the north Italian cities in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, moving to Portugal and Spain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and to the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, now made its temporary home in London (Arrighi, 1994). These years have been called 'the age of atonement', because not only was there an emphasis upon responsibility for one's debts and the need to repay them, and so atone for one's financial mismanagement, but this was mirrored in a theology of the cross which

interpreted the death of Christ as God's punishment for human sin, diverted away from the debtors themselves and inflicted upon the head of the innocent Jesus, thus maintaining confidence in the stability of the moral economy of the world (Hilton, 1988; Selby, 1997).

From approximately 1870 to 1914 the pound sterling ruled the world, and the British theology reached its climax. In the Victorian and Edwardian hymns we find the principal statements and popularisations of this theology. The military metaphors, often taken all too literally, the sense of weariness in the face of a surrounding world of evil, the concentration upon the glories of heaven, and the nostalgic recreation of a pastoral life, are the typical emphases which emerged (Tamke, 1978; Adey, 1988; Wolffe, 1997).

The Present Situation: First Phase

This is the tradition of Christian faith which congregations and local churches in areas influenced by Europe have inherited. For more than four centuries, this theology was functioning. We may deplore it or we may admire it, but this theology did something. It gave a sense of identity, confidence and purpose (Wolffe, 1994). Moreover, it played an important part in establishing Christian faith in almost every nation on earth (Stanley, 1990). We may sometimes be embarrassed about how this took place, but without it Christian faith would not now be in such an advantageous position to influence the history of the world.

However, this faith is no longer functional. The theology of the empire has outlived the empire. The empire has gone but the theology lingers on. Much of the modern church is like the Israelites, going into exile with a royal kingdom theology. Faith has become a remnant, far from the glories of its greatest achievements. How can the Lord's song be sung in a strange land? How can the imperial theology still be proclaimed in a post-imperial age? However, before describing in further detail the characteristics of the religious situation today we must examine in greater detail the content of this received power—theology. In doing so, we shall notice that it is not a recent development. Christian faith has been the partner of imperial power ever since the conversion of Constantine and the adoption of Christian faith as the official religion of the Roman Empire (Kee, 1982). The developments in Britain would not have been possible without a thousand years of preparation. Moreover, since this theology in the form we have received it was shaped by Britain's aspirations and Britain's place in the world, and since those aspirations were shared by other European nations who sometimes had a similar place in the world, or wished to have one (Christensen & Hutchison, 1982), or were influenced by those who did so, the British theology has many links and parallels with theological developments in other European countries. Since Europeans exported this collaborative faith in the hey-day of European power, from approximately 1800 to 1939, it is not surprising that Christians nurtured in the non-European world often bring back to Europe the faith which Europe had a century ago.

The principal features of this imperial faith as it is received today are as follows:

1. *The doctrine of sin*: Sin is driven out of the actual, material world into pre-historical origins, provided with a sexual or mystical transmission and a post-mundane judgement.
2. *God*: The forward dynamic of Christian faith is denied as the God in front of us becomes the God above us. Metaphysics and its accompanying hierarchy takes the place of apocalyptic with its hope of transformation (Bloch, 1972; 1986).
3. *Jesus Christ*: The teaching of Jesus is reduced to a comma in the Apostles' Creed. As with the doctrine of sin, so with the person and work of Jesus, everything has become either beginning (the Nativity), ending (the Crucifixion and Resurrection) or future (the Second Coming and the Last Judgement), but rarely focuses upon the words and deeds of Jesus. In some traditions, there is a kind of concentration upon Jesus which is almost unhealthy. Jesus is no longer conceived of within the Holy Trinity but in a sort of isolation. When Christian faith interpreted Jesus as the second person of the Trinity, the effect was to relativise Jesus, to regard him as relative to the Father and the Spirit, and so to emphasise the place of Jesus Christ in the mission of the whole godhead. When this is forgotten, it becomes easier to adore Jesus in a kind of erotic manner than to obey him. We gaze upon him but rarely follow after him. The Christian mission has been turned into a personality cult of Jesus.
4. *Salvation*: Salvation is conceived of in spiritual and eternal terms. It is realised in heaven or lost in hell. Salvation is individualised and interiorised.
5. *The Church*: The centre of the life of the church has become worship. Because of the church's concentration upon its own life, and its isolation from the mission of God which called it into being, church itself becomes a fetish. The theology of justice and peace is replaced by an orifice theology concerned with what comes in or out of the bodily orifices (Douglas, 1996): sex, speech and sacraments. As the Eucharist becomes intrinsic rather than instrumental, church life becomes trivialised.
6. *The Christian Life*: The Christian faith is conceived of in terms of truth rather than action within the mission of God, through Jesus. This leads to a preoccupation with words, ideas, revelation and authority. The emotional repertoire of the Christian emphasises guilt for oneself rather than anger on behalf of others, while deportment is characterised by niceness rather than by committed action.
7. *The Bible*: The Bible is read in the light of the above assumptions and may thus become incomprehensible, irrelevant, ritualised and boring.
8. *Christian Education*: The Christian education of children often becomes merely moralistically biblical.
9. *Relations with other Religions*: As the mission of God against injustice and for a universal community of inclusion is increasingly minimised, the consciousness of Christians is nurtured into a competitive relationship with people from other faiths.

The Present Situation: Second Phase

Although the British power theology has lost its old function and remains only in a number of fetishised fragments, the powers opposing the mission of God continue to proliferate and strengthen. The power of money has moved not only from London to New York, but already has passed beyond the control of the world's last remaining independent state (the USA), into a globalised form, where it exercises greater authority than ever before (Wachtel, 1990; Amin, 1997; Martin & Schumann, 1997). A money-curtain has been erected around the rich two-sevenths of the world, and the character of Christian tradition continues to evolve within the perspectives of reality which life within this enclosure creates. Money is worshipped as God, and God is worshipped as money (Hull, 1996a; 1997). The most energetic forms of the new power-and-money theology may be found in the United States, which as the most powerful nation in the world today, is able to offer the context within which this sort of theology can still function (Stoll, 1982; Diamond, 1989; Barkun, 1994). The contrast between the relative vigour of Christian faith in the United States and the languid, nostalgic, exhausted form which it often takes in Britain is to be accounted for in terms of the different positions in the history of global economics occupied by these two nations.

We now see that the residue of the British imperial theology begins to take on a new function, which is mainly unconscious. Since the fragments masquerade as genuine Christian faith, and are taken to be so by many British Christians, the mask of British theology now functions at least sometimes and to some extent as a protection against facing the reality of genuine encounter with the mission of God and its implications. This is actually a less healthy situation than the previous one. The relationship between the imperial theology and the place of Britain in the nineteenth century world was positive—the two realities, faith and world, were mutually supportive and this mutuality was consciously realised and spoken about.

Today, however, Christian faith as the remnant of a past reality has a negative relationship towards the modern world of capital and power. Rather than supporting the church and the Gospel in pursuing the mission of God, the theological fragments act as a kind of collective anaesthesia, existing in a dream-like state of nostalgic self-deception. It functions in the service of the money-God to obstruct and prevent Christian faith from re-claiming its calling to serve the mission of God. It is because of this negative, substitutionary dream-like quality that contemporary Christian faith in Britain tends to become a fetish, whereas the genuinely functioning, living, imperial theology of a century ago was not a fetish but an ideology.

The Theology of Resistance

Did no one challenge the growth of the collaboration between the Christian faith in Britain and Britain's search for powerful identity? Yes, there were continual protests and challenges. One of the most striking movements of protest took place during the period 1630 to 1662, the period of the first British overseas colonies and

the civil war. The community at Little Gidding, gathered around Nicholas Ferrar (1592–1637) (Williams, 1970), and the leader of the diggers' movement, Gerrard Winstanley (1609?–1660) (Winstanley, 1973; Bradstock, 1997), are two outstanding examples. There are interesting parallels between Winstanley's theology and the Minjung and liberation theologies of South Korea and Latin America today.

The movement initiated by John Wesley in the eighteenth century can be interpreted as a massive popular protest on behalf of the poor and the marginalised, against the power theology which had been re-established early in the eighteenth century, following the upheavals of the previous period. Although the Arminianism of John Wesley was not new, in its context it represented an explosion of energy for the inclusive community of universal love, the pursuit of which is the mission of God.

As one example of the later influence of Methodism as providing a counter-theology, we could consider the Methodist movement for the rights of agricultural labourers in East Anglia between 1872 and 1896 (Scotland, 1981). In their effort to articulate a gospel theology which would empower the labourers in their struggle, the Methodist preachers and organisers used the expression 'temporal salvation' as a limitation and criticism of 'eternal salvation', which was being used to defer the expectations of justice from this world to the next.

The next example of the protest theology of justice and human rights to be mentioned here is that of Bishop Colenso (1814–1883), Bishop of Natal, who became famous for his courageous attempt to bring biblical study into line with nineteenth century developments in the natural and social sciences. Even more significant, however, was his anthropological work, especially his re-statement of the purpose of Christian missions and his struggle on behalf of the rights of the black people of South Africa against the encroaching demands of British power. In spite of the opposition which his ministry aroused from his fellow bishops in Southern Africa and England, John William Colenso may be regarded as a prophetic figure, one of the earliest champions of liberty and a precursor of liberation theology (Morris, 1973; Parsons, 1997).

Next, we must mention the Christian socialist movement associated with the names of Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–1872), Charles Kingsley (1819–1875), John Ruskin (1819–1900) and others. Maurice lost his Chair of Theology in King's College, London, in 1853, because of his refusal to accept the doctrine of eternal punishment in hell, and had a profound impact upon the emergence of a liberating political education for working people (Maurice, 1968).

Finally, mention must be made of the various expressions of the 'everlasting Gospel' of the mission of God in our own century, including the work of Archbishop William Temple (1881–1944) especially his influence upon the creation of the Welfare State (Temple, 1956). We should also consider the many movements for theological reform in recent decades (Ambler, 1980).

Contributions of enormous significance to the revitalisation of Christian faith as an instrument of God's mission are being made today by new theological movements outside Europe: South American liberation theology, South Korean

Minjung theology, Indian Dalit theology, while movements within the European and North American cultural circles such as, black theology and women's theology, are making very important contributions to our general awareness of the inner nature and purpose of the Christian traditions in America and England, so virulent in the one, so decadent in the other.

In spite of their significance as examples of theology outside the European power-tradition, it is not possible to make a simple application of these non-European theologies to the situation in Europe. There is ample scope for renewal in the critical, protesting, prophetic theology which has always lived on in Europe itself. There is a need to develop these resources in order to recover a fresh sense of Christian mission in Britain today.

Characteristics of a Reconstructed Theological Contribution to God's Mission

I will now make some positive suggestions for the reconstruction of the aspects of the imperial theology noted above.

Sin

The traditional doctrine of sin, which concentrates upon the salvation and sanctification of the sinner, should be supported but qualified by a doctrine which places equal emphasis upon the sufferings of those who are the recipients and victims of sin. At present, the Christian approach towards evil in the world is lopsided in favour of forgiveness for the actors, rather than compensation and justice for the victims (Park, 1993).

God

Increasingly God will be found not in the endless discussions about meaning which have characterised Western theological reflection, but through participation and involvement in theological action on behalf of the emerging community of inclusive love. God will become real when the knowledge of God is pursued in the works of justice and peace (Jer 22:14–16).

Jesus Christ

Rather than merely adoring Jesus, Christian education should encourage discipleship of him. The nations are to be instructed in the things that Jesus has taught (Matt 28:20). The principle features of this teaching are the great reversal between the weak and the powerful, the rich and the poor, and the breaking out everywhere of the community of inclusive love. The death of Jesus Christ will be understood as indicating and exemplifying the presence of God amidst human sufferings, and this will move Christian disciples towards the discovery of God in the midst of

those who suffer. Moreover, Jesus died as a faithful witness to what he had taught and done. Thus his death sanctifies all the movements which seek to establish the community of inclusive love, the protest movements against oppression and injustice. Jesus is the archetype, representative and instigator of God's action for deliverance and is thus the founder and finisher of faith (Heb 12:1). Jesus is the crucified people (Song, 1996).

The Holy Trinity

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity will be seen as a witness and a symbol of the unfinished character of the Christian understanding of the community of inclusive love since the full meaning of the Holy Trinity is still veiled in the future. Moreover, the *perichoretic* unity of the three persons will inspire and activate Christians into all forms of social solidarity. The Greek theologians of the fourth century spoke of the Holy Trinity as a *perichoresis*, an ecstatic circular dance. The Holy Trinity will be increasingly understood as the incorporation of human suffering into the divine experience and as thus motivating and justifying a similar involvement on the part of the church. The essential openness of the Holy Trinity, as representing God's self-disclosure in history and for history, will initiate attitudes of openness towards other historical impressions of the Ultimate (Hull, 1995).

Salvation

Salvation as the eternal well-being of the soul or person of the individual, will be modified and enriched by understanding salvation as everything which overcomes the powers which are hostile to the community of inclusive love, and everything which encourages the flourishing of human life and all life in creation (Jantzen, 1998, pp. 156–70).

The Christian Life

Justification by love will modify and enrich a one-sided emphasis upon justification by faith.

The Bible

As the ambiguity of the Bible is increasingly recognised, and its patriarchal assumptions are grappled with, the Bible will come to have a new relevance as conversation rather than as a reification of the Word of God (Pui-Lan, 1995).

Other Religions

Christian faith will be seen increasingly as the partner of God's other saving projects, and the futile and competitive relationships between the world religions, which have characterised centuries of European domination, will come to an end.

The Education of Faith

In seeking to interpret the educational problem in the context of a non-functioning post-imperial theology, which is the implicit collaborator with the forces which oppose the emergence of the community of inclusive love, it may be helpful to model our theory and action upon Sigmund Freud's theory of the interpretation of dreams (Freud, 1991). Freud distinguished the latent dream, the manifest dream and the elaborated dream. The latent dream is the real dream, the dream which expresses the desires which are normally concealed and repressed. We may compare this with Britain's growing desire for identity, security and prosperity in the world, amalgamated with the Christian tradition which thus acts as an expression of it.

Before the latent dream comes into full consciousness, however, the energies that originally concealed and repressed the desires for wealth and fulfilment come into operation again and affect the remembering of the dream. The manifest dream is the result. This is the dream as we remember it upon waking up. The older elements in the dream which served the primordial desires have been censored out, and one only remembers the innocuous fragments. This is what we have left in the Christian religious folk-consciousness of Britain today. We will not be able to understand many contemporary manifestations of Christian consciousness unless we realise that they are to be accounted for as the residual fragments of what was once the latent dream. The censorship is the prophetic resistance to the collaboration between Christian faith and tribal desire, which has never been entirely without a voice. However, those voices of protest and opposition were operating without the assistance of the social sciences. Before Christian theology had received the penetrating illuminations offered by Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Ernst Bloch, Paul Ricoeur, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and many others, it was more difficult for Christians (even under the pressures of modernity) to understand, analyse and respond to the driving forces behind and beneath the theological surface of Britain. Their attention was, on the whole, fastened upon the content of faith rather than its processes and its functions.

Finally, the dream that is the product of what Freud called secondary elaboration is the dream as we describe it to others, or perhaps to ourselves. Now the incoherent fragments of the manifest dream are bound together into a more-or-less coherent narrative, the mysterious gaps left by the censorship are smoothed over with little explanatory phrases and the result is a kind of story. This is similar to the systematic theology which attempts to make the residual fragments of the manifest dream seem plausible and coherent. This tends to be found in some kinds of the written theology, the theology of books, rather than the theology of lived experience, which generally remains unsophisticated and fragmentary. For example, if Weber was right about the connection between Calvinism and capitalism (Weber, 2002), the desires for wealth and domination which were amongst the human motivations of capitalism, when supported by Calvinism, would be the latent dream. However, as the unity of the latent dream was disrupted by the challenge of a Christian faith

dedicated to justice, the latent dream was fragmented, driven into the unconscious, and what remained were fragments, the manifest dream of certain aspects of post-imperial Christian consciousness. Finally, these fragments were now synthesised, systematised, fused together again in a coherent narrative which became the dream of secondary elaboration, e.g. the hymns of Isaac Watts or the prosperity gospel of contemporary Christian life in wealthy countries.

Educational practice for the reconstruction of relevant Christian consciousness today must confront the problems of self-deception, both individual and collective. In the short-term, modifying the money-curtain may appear to be contrary to British and European interests. This is only one example of the ways in which moving Britain towards a historic mission on behalf of suffering humanity in order to establish an ecumenical community of justice and reconciliation may be seen to be contrary to British interests. Since it is difficult to combine this insight with one's continued self-respect and moral integrity, the mechanisms of self-deception are in continual use. This is particularly true for people within the Christian tradition, for whom the options of a hardened secularised hedonism or a defiant hypocrisy are not so easily available. Self-deception is one of the ways that communities try to forget, and the church as the custodian of the subversive memory of Jesus (Metz, 1980, pp. 88–99) must always struggle against its own self-deception.

This means that Christian education, whether for ministry or for lay discipleship, must reappraise the history of theology in Europe and North America. This can best be done within the context of the social sciences, for the character of this theological tradition can only be understood in relationship to the geo-political and social/economic situation of Britain, in Europe and the world, and is fundamental to the re-education of faith (Hull, 2002b).

By way of contrast, the emerging non-European theologies should also be studied. These should not be added to the theological curriculum as a special study but should be thoroughly integrated into the study of systematics, biblical and historical theology.

A central place must be given in this reconstruction to the study of sin, qualified and enriched as described above, because this represents the church's struggle to comprehend and oppose the structures of evil. The re-education of faith has been seriously hampered by a deficient doctrine of sin. This action/study will involve evaluation and participant action in the realities of such sin, as expressed through poverty, the oppression of children and women, and racism, both in Britain and abroad.

The hymn books must be purged of the relics of the Victorian theology of power.

Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own.

This represents the British theology of power. The gospel of redeeming love does not drown out all music but its own, since it does not seek to oppress and dominate. The music of God is a receptive, listening harmony, which penetrates and elevates all the music of the world. On the other hand, churches must avoid the dangers

of the Jesus-fetish music as well. Christian education must learn to read the Bible again as representing the cry of the oppressed people, and as God's redemptive action on their behalf.

Finally, the theological re-education of the churches cannot be done through talking, words and study. Only through thoughtful participation in action on behalf of the community of inclusive love will the dreaming theology of the post-imperial church be dissipated.

Conclusions

The Christian tradition in Europe and North America today faces a critical choice. The medieval concept of Christendom was replaced by the modern concept of Christianity. This was an understanding of the Christian tradition as being a systematic structure of belief forming a world religion in competitive relations with other similar religious systems. As such, *Christianity* was para-phenomenal, being the reified expression on the plane of ideas of the emerging global competition between Europe and the rest of the world. The period of *Christianity* is now coming to an end. The future lies with what we might call *Christian-ness* (Panikkar, 1988), a revival of ethical discipleship to Jesus inspired by biblical faith in God as sender, sent and sending, the Triune God in redemptive action on behalf of God's world. However, the passage of *Christianity* into *Christian-ness* is not uncontested. A shrewd and hardened form of *Christianity* is also emerging. This adopts even more competitive and rigid forms of life as its dream-like facade is unmasked. We may describe this as Christian Religionism (Hull, 1996b), and it serves the Money God, just as *Christian-ness* serves the living God.

Is there a future for the church? There will continue to be a future for the church as the instrument of Christian faith as long as the church is true to the Christian faith and Christian faith is faithful to the mission of God. However, one might imagine another future for the church, a future in which it becomes the shrewd and hardened collaborator with the powers of financial oppression. Then the church would no longer be the church.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE NATION-STATE

Gabriel Moran

Department of Humanities and the Social Sciences, New York University

Introduction

This essay is a reflection on the ambiguous role of the nation-state in its relation to religion. I examine the way in which the nation-state is a protector of religion. I also examine the way in which the nation-state needs to be resisted and criticised by religion. Religious education thus has an important part to play in maintaining a fruitful tension between the nation-state and religion.

Our present system of nation-states is usually traced to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Since then, the nation-state is assumed to be the main agent in the world's politics, economics and social dealings. The twentieth century had opposite movements relative to the nation-state. Some national groups strove to get the privilege, power and security of statehood. At the same time, there have been regular announcements that the nation-state is finished, that it has outlived its usefulness. Is one of these movements completely mistaken? Or is it possible that the nation-state, while destined for eventual retirement, is still important for both good and bad reasons?

The nation-state has had a key role in the articulation of modern ethics. The central problem of ethics is how to unite two outlooks. One outlook is a commitment to family, friends and neighbors. This particularistic view might extend as far as the nation. The other outlook recognises the limitation of all groups, including the nation. It looks to a universal concern with all humanity and the whole earth.

At their best, the major religions of the world embody such a twofold ethics: a passionate attention to the particular concerns of everyday life, and at the same time a recognition that every human being and all of the earth is dependent on the creative power of God. Religion, of course, is not always at its best. When not challenged by disciplined understanding, religious passion is placed at the exclusive service of a small segment of humanity. The love of one's neighbor is interpreted to mean love for one's close kin, and indifference or hatred for everyone else. Religious beliefs too often dichotomise the world into good and evil.

Modern Western Enlightenment began as an attempt to retain the hope of a universal ethic but without the passions and prejudices of religion. The parochialism of Jewish and Christian religions was to be superseded by Platonism and Stoicism. The new sciences would gradually replace religion; the ideal of a single humanity would be the guide of ethics. The individual, cut loose from encumbrances of family, tribe and religion, would exercise rational control of life. When the individual understood what his own good is, he would treat others with fairness and equality. Erasmus, one of the first humanists, already had the idea in the sixteenth century: if the name of country is of such nature to create bonds between those who have a common country, why do not men resolve that the universe should become the country of all (Chapiro, 1950, p. 173).

The contemporary thinker who has most consistently developed this outlook is Peter Singer. He has rigorously applied a utilitarian principle to the world as a whole, overriding all claims of what he calls a partial benevolence (Singer, 2003). The only thing that can justify concern with a family member or a friend is that it makes the world as a whole better off. Where conflict arises between partial and impartial commitments, the former should be jettisoned.

Our sense of moral obligation is thus made dependent on our commitment to humanity, or more exactly, to human beings impartially considered. This account of moral responsibility seems at odds with the way that responsibility originates, namely, as an answer to being personally addressed. A professor of philosophy may view the world as a collection of individuals who are linked as members of the human community. The mother of an infant or a nurse in hospice is not likely to see the world in such impartial terms. *This* infant, *that* patient, *my* beloved become the particular embodiment of all humanity. This experience can be blinding; it can also be profoundly humanising.

Thus, while the world's religions have an argument with nationalism as a tendency to divinise the nation-state, they also have to be skeptical about the collapse of all intermediary structures into mere instruments of a single world community. In the latter case, instead of the nation being divinised, a life or an ideology of unity may claim ultimacy. All of the religions warn that nothing in experience is divine. Every moment and every place can be revelatory of the divine, but none is guaranteed to be so.

Religious education should, therefore, approach the nation-state as something more than a temporary instrument that is blocking human unity, but also as something less than the ultimate arbiter of justice and the seat of ultimate loyalty. A love for one's country is healthy if it grows out of love for one's family and neighboring community, out of respect and appreciation of the physical environment and out of a knowledge of the actual history not just the political myths of the country.

The nation-state protects the rights of religion and the rights of individuals to practice their religion. The nation-state is also a serious competitor with religion for the life and death commitment of a country's citizens. In the latter case, the nation does become a block to seeing the human community as well as the human relation to a creative power in the universe.

Protector of Rights

Despite the nation-state's tendency to divinise itself, it is currently the main protector of rights, including the right to practice one's religion. The weakening of the nation's power is dangerous unless there is a legitimate authority to replace it. The twentieth century failed to develop a better authority pattern than was bequeathed to it by the nineteenth century. It seems safe to say that the twenty-first century will not have such a luxury of time.

What we now have in the United Nations is a fragile symbol of what might be. An old saying at the UN is that when there is a conflict between two small nations, the conflict disappears; when the conflict is between a small nation and a large nation, the small nation disappears; and when the conflict is between two large nations, the UN disappears. The saying may need an addendum today that when the United States has a conflict, the UN either agrees or is declared irrelevant. Nonetheless, with all its limitations, the United Nations has had some success in establishing the idea of an international ethics.

The language of international ethics is 'human rights.' One can easily forget how recent is this language and how much progress has been achieved in a short time. The phrase 'human rights' was practically unheard of in the United States until the presidency of Jimmy Carter in 1976. The discussions of the 1960s were about 'civil rights', an appeal to explicit laws defining specific political rights. The claim of human rights is a far more ambitious undertaking, that is, the claim that all people have rights simply as human beings. The wider a claim is, the deeper has to be its roots. And that is where all talk of human rights is worrisome. The ultimate basis for human rights is unclear, but many of the leading voices in the struggles for human rights consider the issue of a philosophical basis for these rights to be a distraction from the practical problems at hand.

Religion is often thought to be the enemy of human rights. The human rights movement in this respect is similar to the environmental movement. Religion, more specifically, Christianity, hovers over most of the environmental discussion as the presumed supplier of oppressive language and imagery. But a better acquaintance with Christianity, while not letting that religion off the hook, would reveal other possibilities that the environmental movement needs. The environmental movement cannot succeed unless the positive possibilities of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and other religions are part of the movement.

In a similar way, positing human rights either in disregard of or in opposition to religion cannot work. Diane Orentlicher rightly criticises Michael Ignatieff for refusing to consider religion's role in the discussion of human rights. Ignatieff argued that human rights requires staying at the table in order to listen to all parties. But for Ignatieff, only religion seems too far beyond the pale. Orentlicher argues that human rights have to be accepted *within* religious traditions. That does not mean claiming that Christianity or Judaism or Islam invented the idea of human rights, but it does mean acknowledging that human rights and the major religions are compatible (Orentlicher, 2001, pp. 141–158).

My own inclination is to wish to search for the philosophical and religious basis of human rights. I realise that the world cannot wait for a consensus that might take decades to emerge or might never be reached. Politicians, diplomats and lawyers understandably put ultimate questions to the side in working through currently needed agreements. But 'human rights' must be a category that religious education could investigate.

I will make a brief summary of United Nations documents that are related to religion and religious education. This history is inescapably intertwined with the idea of human rights, even though there has been an unwillingness to wrestle with religion's place in the human rights story.

The story is usually begun in 1948 with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Eleanor Roosevelt, who had been appointed to head the committee that drafted the declaration, was put there mainly because the project was thought to be innocuous. To the surprise of nearly everyone (perhaps even Roosevelt) the committee produced a document that was debated and ratified without a single negative vote (The Soviet bloc, Saudi Arabia and South Africa abstained). More surprising, the document has continued to gain in importance during the last half century.

The only agreement that was possible at the time was a 'declaration' which is not a legally binding document. The United States Senate would not have approved a binding agreement. The hope was for a legally binding 'covenant' in the future. When the Republicans came into office in 1952 they immediately announced that they would not sign any covenant (Evans, 1998, p. 87). The covenant became two covenants (because of U.S./ Soviet conflict) that emerged in 1966. The United States ratified the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights in 1992; it has yet to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The Universal Declaration has very little to say about religion. Some heated controversy over religion occurred in the writing of the document. After one heated exchange between the Lebanese Thomist, Charles Malik, and the Chinese Buddhist, P.C. Chang, Eleanor Roosevelt ruled out discussion of religion in the origin of human rights.

The document's only references to religion are in articles 2, 18, 26 and 29. Article 2 says that rights apply 'without distinction of any kind' including sex, race and religion. Article 18 asserts a right to 'freedom of thought, conscience and religion.' This freedom of religion includes the right to change one's religion and the right to manifest one's religion.

The UN's first step toward seeing that the right to religion is observed was through a 1959 commission. A report was made on a study of 82 countries. The author, Arcot Krishnaswami, struggled with the complexity of a right to manifest one's religion. The right of one group to disseminate its religion can conflict with another group's right to their own opinions and privacy. Article 29 of the UDHR had acknowledged the need for some limitations in the exercise of the right. On one side, the ban in French schools of the scarf worn by Muslim women seems to run counter to the right to express one's religion. In contrast, a recent court ruling in the

United States against a Muslim woman seems justified. She had claimed a religious right not to remove the covering of her face for the photo on her automobile license.

The most important international document barring discrimination against religion is the 1981 declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. The clumsy name is indicative of the difficulties that existed in reaching any consensus. The Soviets objected that religion did not cover atheism. The face-saving agreement was that the Preface and Article 1 refer to 'whatever belief' (Lerner, 2000, p. 20). This document noted that not all differences are unfairly discriminatory. Religions need leeway in hiring personnel, mandating dress, or organising observances.

Both of the Covenants adopted in 1966 have an interesting reference to 'religious education.' I have not been able to discover how they came to use the term. Article 18 of the Covenant of Political and Civil Rights and Article 13 on the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights use identical language: the parents have a right to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in accordance with the parents' convictions. The good news here is the recognition of religious education as a universal right. The drawback is the assumption that religious education is exclusively concerned with parental rights. I would not disparage this parental right. It is indispensable that the parent-not the state- should decide on the child's religious education. But religious education does not cease at age 6 or even age 18. The United Nations itself is enmeshed in a kind of religious education. Until it conceives of religious education as a lifelong and life wide endeavor, it will not be very effective in seeing its own role as mediating religious forces.

One fascinating aspect of this UN affirmation of a parental right to control the religious education of their children is a claim by some Christian groups that their religious rights are being violated by the school's teaching. The most common complaint is that homosexuality is being taught as morally acceptable. The UN text is vulnerable here, having declared that the parent has the right to determine that the child's moral and religious education is in accord with the parents' beliefs. Since the Convention of the Rights of the Child defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 years old, the parents' right would seem to apply to 17 year-olds as well as 7 year-olds.

This parental protest has taken on added fuel with the arrival of the Internet which links groups world wide. Schools understandably can be distressed by the attack of these religious groups. Nonetheless, it is amazing to have right-wing groups citing UN documents to defend their rights. That step could lead to the discussion of other rights in other contexts.

One final document I note is a 1998 UN report by Abdelfattah Amor. It is a survey of 77 states on the problem of compulsory religious instruction. Most states still seem oblivious of the rights of religious minorities. Students are not given alternatives to that of instruction in the religion of the majority. There is very little teaching of what the report calls 'comparative religion.' Education is needed, Amor notes, for the development of a culture of tolerance. But religious education that is unaware of the students' diversity of religion can be oppressive and intolerant.

Religion as a Challenge to the Nation-State

The second part of this essay is a near reversal of perspective. From looking at the nation-state as protector of the right to religion and religious education, I now look at the need for religious education to be critical of the nation-state. That suggestion may seem to be one of biting the hand that protects you. However, criticism is not rejection or condemnation. Religious education has to aim its criticism at specific policies of the nation-state. Patriotism can be a virtue if it is truly a love of the *patria*, the people and the land that have nourished a person. But what is called patriotism is often a manipulated endorsement of the nation-state in its entirety. Unbridled nationalism rather than the nation is what lays claim to a religious commitment.

No religion totally identifies with a nation-state. At least theoretically, every religious community keeps some distance from national policies and is willing to protest against policies seen to be evil. Christianity has a complicated history on this point. Its early history is marked by heroic stories of Christians willing to die in defiance of empire. Then for a millenium the Christian church (Eastern and Western) tried to work in tandem with the ruling secular power. The critical voice was often muffled. The Protestant Reformation sparked a return to a biblically based prophetic criticism. But it did not resolve the problem of the relation of Christian churches to the nation-state.

A state often had an 'established' church which did not leave much room either for other Christian churches or other religions. It was also not the healthiest condition for the established religion. There was little room for a religious education that was other than indoctrination into the religion of the majority. The 1998 Amor Report, as noted above, seems to show that religious education still means just that in most of the world.

The Jewish history on this point is simpler than that of Christianity but more tragic. Living in diaspora for two thousand years, Jews were not tempted to wield state power against their enemies. They survived by creating enclaves of Jewish life and practice. In modern times, however, they have shared both some of the possibilities and some of the temptations that Christians have had. They identified with the secular culture of European nations. Many Jews of the nineteenth century were proud to be German Jews, not only accepting of but leading the way in German culture and philosophy. That fact was what made the Holocaust so shocking; the slaughter was not by barbarian invaders but by the nation-state that Jews had experienced as their own.

In recent history, the two main alternatives for Jews have been the United States of America and Israel, each providing an experience of freedom but fraught with new problems. One of the great glories of the United States is that it provided a home for Jews. Among most of the immigrant groups that came to the United States, only about half of the group stayed, the rest went back home. In contrast, nearly all the Jews stayed. They saw the possibilities in the United States and in general they made good use of those resources to prosper. They did not get the power of political office in the United States but they used the educational system to become physicians, lawyers, professors and other professionals. The danger has

been in too closely identifying Jewish life with the freedom offered by the secular nation-state. But some Jews have continued to risk popular disapproval by standing up for the dispossessed. The American Civil Liberties Union, for example, continues to supply Jewish lawyers to fight unfair policies of the United States government.

The situation in Israel is radically different from almost all previous Jewish experience. I would not presume to narrate the story of the last fifty years or to propose what policies should be followed today. I just note that Jews are finding how complex it can be to bring an ancient religion and a modern secular state into a working relation. Which takes precedence when there is conflict? What interpretation of the bible and Jewish history will influence state policies?

The Muslim relation to the modern nation-state is a very different story from either the Jewish or the Christian. Islam is a more overtly political religion, not content with a separation of religious and secular powers. The temptation to identify the religion with worldly power is great. But as with all religions, there are Muslim voices of protest when dominative and oppressive power reigns.

At present, Western countries hope that Muslim countries will become modern and accept the canons of European Enlightenment. That development may be both possible and desirable, but perhaps the more realistic hope would be for a religious education in the Muslim world that is other than indoctrination, which is as important as political and economic modernization.

Islam has never fully endorsed the idea of the nation-state, especially in those parts of the world where European nations carved out the boundaries of states. Islam puts its hope in the *umma*, the community of Muslims world wide. As Islam grows in number within the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe, it has a chance to work out a relation between religious and secular powers that differs from Christian ideology. In the United States the metaphor of church-state, which became legally enshrined only in the 1930s, is patently inadequate to discuss the many ways that religious and civil powers interact (Hamburger, 2002). The United States still cannot admit the need for some form of religious education in its state schools, a fact not unrelated to the widespread ignorance of religion among its citizenry.

I make the above sketches of the Abrahamic traditions to point toward the scope and complexity of religious education internationally considered. Most of us most of the time have to concentrate on our humble piece of an unimaginably complex picture. I am suggesting, however, a context for whatever aspect of religion we deal with. I do not think that one should go into the classroom every day to criticise the policies of the government. That would quickly degenerate into ideological rants. I do think we need to maintain a critical distance from the ideology that substitutes national chauvinism for a Christian, Jewish, or Muslim commitment.

I think that every religious believer has an ambiguous relation to his or her nation-state, even the kindest and gentlest state. A Muslim in India or a Christian in Indonesia may have a problem living in an open and democratic society. Each situation has its own subtle difficulties that have to be looked at in detail. Here I concentrate on the situation I know best: the United States of America.

Recent polls show that in practically every part of the world the United States is considered to be the chief threat to world peace (New York Times 2004). To most U.S. citizens that is surprising; they think of their country as peace-loving, as mediating the conflicts between other nation, as generous in helping the oppressed. The gap between these two perceptions is bewildering. Is the rest of the world blind with envy? Are people in the United States incapable of understanding their nation's history and its present policies? As for the explanation of other-nation-envy, I assume there is some resentment about one country using its economic and military clout, even when well-intended. Nonetheless, the main concern of every U.S. citizen has to be the perception of their own country by others and a willingness to be pointedly critical about their government's policies.

The reason that there is so little effective criticism either from within or from without the country is the confusion of the nation-state and a religious dream. From its very beginning, the United States identified itself with Europe's dream of the promised land. 'America' had been coined in 1507 with a double meaning: the name of a continent and the name of a fabulous place variously identified with the original paradise or the realised kingdom of God. When the British version of America separated from the empire and became a sovereign state, it called itself the United States of America. The most important of those four words is the third one: *of*. If the country had been named the United States in America, the continental meaning might have emerged as primary. Instead, by identifying itself with the religious dream, the continental meaning was swallowed by the religious connotations of 'America.'

At the beginning of the United States, its religion was an unsteady combination of Deism and Evangelical Christianity. After about 215 years of existence, the picture is remarkably similar. The Deists are still here, having pushed God further off the heavenly map. The Evangelicals, after getting pushed out of sight, are back stronger than ever. Catholics and Jews have increased in number but always with some trepidation about how they fit into 'America.' Liberal Protestant Christians are still in control of key positions in the country but with some worry about the shrinking size of their congregations.

To the rest of the world, the several hundred religious distinctions, called denominations, is of little interest. All of the different religions appear as variations on the country's all embracing religion, America. Unless the traditional religions can exercise restraint on that religion, America can be an excuse to do whatever leaders of the United States government wish to do. Who can possibly oppose God's mission to the world?

The difficulty in getting the problem stated is that the name United States of America is regularly shortened to America. If the country were the United States of America (instead of the states of Virginia, Massachusetts, New York, and so on) that would be logical. But reference to America in every few sentences spoken in the United States is a source of constant confusion. Europeans, originators of the dream, are of no help in straightening out the mess. They are always talking about Europe and America when they really mean Europe and the United States.

Terrorists are well aware that 'America' is the enemy; Osama ben Laden has had nothing to say about the United States but he is very aware of the effect of America throughout the world.

The problem, as I noted above, is more than two hundred years old. It may seem too late to change things. But two centuries is a short time in the life of nations and humanity. When Mao was asked whether he thought the French Revolution had been a success, he said it was too early to tell. The same could be said about the country born about the same time, the badly named United States of America. It sometimes is a force for good; it sometimes does terrible things, often inadvertently. Its greatest danger is that it has never considered itself one nation among many, subject to international agreements. Its foreign policy is confused with a religious mission to save the world. And the language it has taught the world to speak makes effective criticism nearly impossible.

What has always been a problem for the United States and the world has jumped in magnitude during the last few years. There was a moment between Sept 12 and Sept 16, 2001, when it seemed there was a possibility that this problem would be faced. The United States moment of reflection and restraint was swallowed by the metaphor of war; since then 'operation eternal war' has not had any serious opposition from within the country. America overwhelmed the United States. The absence of any sustained political, academic or religious criticism has been frightening. I am most disappointed by the left wing in this country. Supposedly, they populate the university faculties. But when it comes to 'America,' they speak the same language as the right. When they try to be critical they sound like they are attacking America (Coulter, 2003). No one will ever get anywhere in this country attacking America. They will be drowned out by liturgical hymns such as God Bless America and America the Beautiful. Criticism has to be directed at the United States, its government and specific policies of that government.

Catholics, Protestants and Jews have to bring to bear the resources of their traditions that are older than the religion of America. When the Sunday Eucharist in my church finishes the service with the singing of God Bless America, I have doubts that the U.S. Catholic church can find the place to stand. Probably no one religious body can mount an effective criticism of the United States' relation to America. During the civil rights struggle of the 1960s, Catholics, Protestants and Jews found some common ground. The task of criticising the nation itself would be a more difficult meeting place, but criticism is urgently needed.

The key to religious success in this country may lie in Islam finding its voice. Since 'America' from the beginning was a biblical image, Christians and Jews could find a place under its aegis, sometimes being absorbed by it and sometimes challenging America's ultimacy. Every other religion, including Islam, has had difficulty finding acceptance in 'America.' Ironically, while Islam is thought by many people to be the external enemy of the United States, the future of genuine religious life within the United States may largely depend on a vibrant Muslim community. If the United States could accept Islam, the religion of America might

finally receive some effective criticism. The critical interplay between America and Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions would signal the emergence of a field of religious education in the United States.

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RELIGIONS IN THE POST MODERNIST ERA

Joanmarie Smith

Director, Spiritual Formation for Local Pastors

Introduction

In one of our earliest works, my colleague, Gloria Durka, and I published a model of God which we believe reflected the needs of the time especially epistemologically (Durka & Smith, 1976). This article continues that effort but by offering an analogy for all religious traditions, I hope to provide a framework for an appreciative ecumenism or at least a tolerance in an age that is cataclysmically threatened by religious divisions.

Part One: Knowledge as Imagination

Any foundational piece in the theory of education must, it seems to me, address the questions: What do we know? And how do we know? To date three dramatically different answers have been given to these questions. That shift from one answer to another marks three great watersheds in Western history. The shift turns on what people think of as grounding knowledge or how we determine that something is true. Classically, knowledge has been defined as justified true belief. How we justify a belief or on what grounds we conclude that an idea or perception is true tells us what knowledge is for us.

The first epoch is marked by the conviction that we know only what has been revealed. Revelation is the ultimate authority for anything we claim to know. Our earliest recorded history is religious history. God or the gods reveal to selected persons all that is needed to live a meaningful life. This era lasts until approximately the middle of the seventeenth century.

The second epoch lasts until the twentieth century and is characterized by the insight that we know only what we experience. ‘Show me,’ say U.S. Midwesterners, say succinctly capturing the epistemology of the era. ‘My senses will tell me what is actually the case; what is true.’ The scientific revolution of the seventeenth century

led to the enshrining of this notion of knowledge in the Enlightenment. It ushers in the modern era.

In our own time, many of our most revered thinkers believe that we cannot know in the classical sense. What we do is imagine and our most fruitful imaginings are called knowledge. ‘Truths’ seem to be no more than those beliefs about which there is a consensus.

In the Matter of Imagination

Knowing was such a totally engaging activity for the Israelites that it could include sexual intercourse among its referents. Today we must add the adjective ‘carnal’ to extend knowledge that far. Even so, students of knowing have become convinced or reconvinced that knowing is not just an activity of the mind but rather of body-mindedness. The imagination best designates the spectrum of body-mind powers with which we compose an experience (Hart, 1968, pp. 186–187). In fact, it is the imagination that makes our experience of reality possible by patterning and flavoring our world.

Patterning Reality

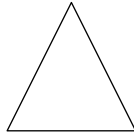
Defining reality as ‘that which is the way that it is’ or ‘whatever exists as it exists’ we sense that we have not said much. ‘A booming, buzzing confusion’ (James, 1829, p. 29) has content closer to our experience. Yet on our better days we do not experience reality that way either. We experience it as patterned, as a discrete set of things and relationships. The things may be grim and relationships may be tragic, but they are there. Or are they? Where do the patterns come from? Max Born, the Nobel Physicist (1954) who with his conferees in physics, the ‘hardest science,’ can be said to have ushered in what is called the post-modernist era with observations like the following:

We were taught that there exists an objective physical world, which unfolds itself according to immutable laws independent of us; we are watching this process like the audience watch a play in the theatre...Quantum physics however, interprets the experience in a different way. We may compare the observer of a physical phenomenon not with the audience of a theatrical performance, but with that of a football game where the act of watching, accompanied by applauding or hissing has a marked influence on the speed and concentration of the players, and thus on what is watched. In fact, a better simile is life itself where the audience and actors are the same persons. It is the action of the experimentalist who designs the apparatus which determines essential features of the observations. Hence, there is no objectively existing situation as was supposed to exist in classical physics (Born, 1956, p. 234).

I am told that the first vision of a person born blind whose sight has been restored is a wash of color. They do not see things; they do not see foregrounds and

backgrounds but simply a confusion of radiances. They must learn to pattern chair and lamp and background and foreground and red out of that confusion. We forget that we do not see chairs of red either. I have used the following approach to make the case that experience is our interaction with reality *after* it has been patterned or netted by our imagination.

Most people remember the question from philosophy or psychology 101 about whether or not the tree falling in the forest makes a sound if there is no ear to hear it. Oddly enough, however, many people do not remember the answer, 'No, if there is no ear to hear, there is no sound.' It seems so preposterous to some that it helps to whip out a transistor radio and travel around the dial and different bands. Everyone must acknowledge that the sounds were in the room before we had the instrument to access them. They also agree that the quality of the sounds coming through the airwaves depends upon the quality of the radio we are using. We conclude: stimulus + sensor = sensation. Then the question becomes, 'Do we ever have a pure, or raw, or uninterpreted sensation?'



To continue the discussion, I draw the above on the blackboard, whiteboard, computer screen or whatever passes for those tools of teaching today. The students are asked to say what they see. Most respond immediately, 'a triangle.' I explain that they do not see a triangle. 'Triangle' is a high level mathematical abstraction. Then some say three lines. But three is also an abstraction. There are no three things in the universe. There are only ones. Everything is unique (and one, and one, and one). And, as for lines, a line is a series of points having length, but no width. And points are geometric elements that have position but no size, shape, or extension. Now how could one see that or those? And so it goes, as people call out, 'black and white' and recognize that they, too, are abstractions. We conclude that we never have a pure or raw sensation; it is always interpreted. The point here, of course, is that we cannot say what we see the way we see it; the sight is always interpreted. We see 'as,' as a triangle, as three lines.

In other words, our experience of reality is mediated by interpretive schemes. Experience is not simply interaction with our environment (including ourselves) but is our interpreted interaction. The imagination casts a kind of netting upon reality. Not that we do not experience reality, we do. What we experience, however, is not so much the nature of the ooze-through but the shape, measurement, and imprint of the netting. The theory of knowing outlined here is sometimes called 'critical realism.' Two scholars in religious studies who explicitly use this theory are Ian Barbour and John Hick. See for example: 'The critical realist recognizes the

importance of human imagination in the formation of theories and acknowledges the incomplete and selective character of scientific theories...Descriptions of nature are human constructions but nature is such as to bear description in some ways and not others' (Barbour, 1974, p. 37). For a more recent treatment of this realism by Barbour see *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers, or Partners?* (2000, pp. 75–78). The theory is also called a kind of neo-Kantianism. John Hick distinguishes it from Kantianism this way: 'We necessarily perceive the world as it appears to beings with our own particular kind of perceptual machinery. But the way in which it appears to human perceivers is the way it is in relation to human perceivers. In Kantian language, the phenomenal world is the noumenal world as humanly experienced' (Hick, 1985, pp. 104–105).

The work of cartographers provides an analogy. The lines of latitude and longitude with which they mark our maps are obviously a construct of human imagination. But this netting makes it possible to know where we are and to get where we are going. Just so, the patterning of all of reality enables us to know where we are and get where we are going.

Flavoring Reality

While the patterning or netting function of imagination may appear to be more closely related to the mind of body-mindedness, the flavoring function demonstrably involves the body. It is almost as if our models or patterns or imaginative constructs have sensible qualities; as if they have aromas, tastes, textures, colors, and perhaps even sound that more or less appeal to us.

As the ear shapes the sound, and our taste buds give us sour, sweet, bitter, and salty, so our imagination flavors our constructs in ways that cause us to be attracted or repelled by what we experience. It is this function of the imagination that politicians pander to in election years. We refer to it as 'the image.' But it is not so much a picture to which we react as it is a composite of picture, smell, taste, and sound communicated by how the vote-seeker comes through our netting – the 'feel' of the candidate. Much of these netting patterns and flavorings come from society and our individual backgrounds.

Sources of Our Patterning

Socialization is a prime source of our labeling, and language is the most obvious tool of socialization. But words are human constructions. In the Oxford English Dictionary, we can follow the derivation and entrance of words into English. In our own lifetimes we see words emerge (e-mail) and fade (thee and thy) and change meaning. In the King James version of the Bible, let meant hinder and prevent meant precede. Yet as loose and living as our language is, we have to learn it. We study and learn language the way we study and learn chemistry. In other words, although we recognise that any particular language is a human creation, the projection of a society, the language in turn shapes us and dictates how we must use it. The rules

of language reflect arbitrary agreements. Like the number of feet between bases on a baseball diamond, the rules can be changed at any time if a significant number of interested parties agree to the change. But until they are, one is judged 'wrong' if one uses a verb tense incorrectly, just as a baseball player is 'out' if he stops five feet before the base, no matter how convinced he is that the bases should only be eighty-five feet apart.

The examples from language and baseball also illustrate the situation that alone we cannot introduce a novel or changed interpretation into the mix. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, authors of *The Social Construction of Reality*, refer to the circumstance that we cannot sustain a solitary interpretation; we need a plausibility structure, that is a community of persons who will support our proposed interpretation (1966, ff.). To invent words for which no one else knows the meaning is to engage in a futile exercise. Similarly, to 'discover' a law in physics that no one else supports is to forego the possibility of publication so that potential believers cannot even be rounded up. In our own day, it is also to forego funding, which makes the accumulation of credibility through validating experiments an impossibility.

Berger and Luckmann could have entitled their book *The Volley Ball Syndrome*. Reality is a ball kept in play by team of believers. As the believers fall away, perhaps to play in another game, perhaps to leave the game altogether in death, the ball is kept aloft with more and more difficulty until it is finally dropped and often judged by those in other games never to have been 'real' in the first place. The famous physicist, Max Planck, who introduced the notion of energy as quanta, wrote in his autobiography, 'A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it' (Kuhn, 1970, p. 151). The new generation then concludes that the opponents had been playing bad science all along.

We bring some awareness to our incorporation of the conventions that we call language or baseball or physics. There are other conventions, however, that seem to seep into our socialization, into our interpretive schemes of reality. Paradoxically, these cultural conventions seem to exercise more power over our interaction with reality than those of which we are aware.

Why should eating cat, for example, disturb us more than eating chicken? No reason. Yet I have seen people become physically ill at the prospect. In our culture we do not eat cat. Moreover, I would wager that if a Gallup poll were to be taken asking people which they would rather be accused of-being irreligious or smelling bad (here irreligious could be replaced by lying, stealing, adultery, perhaps even murder) I would wager that a large majority would choose irreligious. In our culture, cleanliness is not next to godliness, it supersedes godliness. Yet cleanliness is a relatively recent value and smelling clean even more recent.

Individual Structures of Our Interpretive Schemes

In addition to society's input to our experience of reality, we also bring our uniqueness to bear on our interactions in the form of our genes, our past, our current beliefs, and our commitments.

No two sets of fingerprints are alike. (Identical twins are the exception.) The pattern of our prints on everything we touch symbolizes the uniqueness of the way we touch the world. We are not usually as aware of the converse: that the world touches us through that pattern too. All our experience bears our unique imprint. What we hear, what we taste, what we see is filtered through this original relation to the universe.

The genetic influence on our experience is not limited to sensation. Whether we are genetically predisposed to have a surplus of fat cells will determine to a large extent how we interact with our world—at least three times a day every day of our lives. Our genes even suggest the way we will experience death by making us more susceptible to some diseases rather than others. Studies of identical twins separated at birth suggest that our knowledge of genes is on the verge of a breakthrough. Apparently, our genetic nature accounts for more of our traits and attitudes than we had ever imagined (Ridley, 2003, pp. 72–90).

The Role of the Past and Present

Through the years we continue to shape our uniqueness in the choices we make, the memories that we entertain, the beliefs we hold, the commitments we embrace. Our choices, like a sculptor's chisel chip away at our possibilities until a shape emerges. As we age, the shape hardens. Our choices diminish in number and extent as possibility disappears. A person who has chosen a career as an accountant must come to grips with the fact that she or he will never see the world as an astronaut does. Our choices shape what we see and when we see it. Our memories also shape what we experience. They lure or repel us in certain directions according to the flavor of the memory. A man may decide to include certain disciplines in the way he raises a child as result of memories of his own childhood. A woman may decide not to become a physician because of sad memories of an absent parent physician.

Our beliefs and commitments similarly direct and color our experience. Only people who believe that miracles can happen will see miracles; nonbelievers will see up-to-now inexplicable phenomenon. As one commentator phrased it, 'When I believe it, I'll see it' (Ornstein, 1977, p. 8).

Is Relativism Inevitable?

The discussion so far has done little to add to our confidence that we can get beyond relativism. If, in fact, knowledge is one's imagination patterning and flavoring reality, how can we determine which patternings and flavorings deserve our belief? Is knowledge simply a convention like eating chicken instead of cat? 'It's a free country,' as they say. Does that mean we are free to believe whatever we wish? What is lost in this excursion into 'what we know and how we know it' is the possibility of certitude. What has become problematic in the definition of knowledge as justified true belief is its specifying note: true. If the reliability of knowledge can be salvaged, it depends on the possibility of justifying beliefs. But before engaging in a salvaging operation, we should examine what we have lost when we have lost truth. If, in fact, we have lost it.

Models of Truth

Our most common notion of truth goes by the name ‘correspondence theory.’ If I say that it is raining outside and that corresponds to what is happening, I am said to have spoken the Truth. Trees falling in the forest notwithstanding, this model of truth is very helpful in the dailliness of our lives. It equips us to take umbrellas with us without too much soul searching. However, the correspondence theory of truth is like Euclidean geometry which enables us to navigate the planet well enough, but is not adequate to space travel. In the larger picture, the correspondence theory is inadequate too. Actually, it is inadequate in the smaller picture, but negligibly so.

Once we forego the possibility of access to reality as it is, we simultaneously forego the possibility of comparing our interpretations with the real thing. The consensus on what constitutes rain, however, is sufficiently universal—and perhaps trivial—that we can check the truth of the statement, ‘It is raining,’ by using the model of correspondence without anxiety. As the issues get larger, the capacity of the correspondence method to get at truth diminishes proportionately.

The Hebrew Model of Truth

Although the correspondence notion of truth is what we are usually referring to in our conversation, it is not the only one. Truth in the correspondence theory is a Greek concept that should not surprise us because *scientia* (knowledge) and science are Greek gifts to the west. Hebrew does not have an equivalent for truth in the Greek or correspondence sense. The Hebrew word, *emet* is probably closer to the Anglo Saxon etymology of *true* which most lexicographers see as *drew* or *tree* referring to the firmness of the tree. In other words, to be true was to be dependable, to be faithful. The relation of truth to trust in this theory is more than the obvious visible resemblance. To ‘plight one’s troth’ is Middle English for pledging one’s truth, that is, one’s fidelity, one’s trustworthiness.

In this Hebrew theory, an interpretation, a meaning *acquires* truth, becomes more and more credible, that is, more and more believable. Verification (literally: making true) is not a once-and-for-all exercise; it is an ongoing activity in which an interpretation accumulates credit or, as it were, trustworthiness. The process is not unlike the way we acquire a good credit rating. We do so by coming through in a creditable way every time we are put to the test by the presentation of a bill. Even after bankruptcy, we are likely to be able to find someone who will give us credit, who will trust us. So a failure of the evidence does not necessarily falsify an interpretation. However, a pattern of failures like a pattern of bankruptcies, while never establishing with certainty the falseness of a model of reality or the untrustworthiness of a would-be-borrower, make both less and less creditable.

Circumstances work to persuade or dissuade us of the truthfulness in the sense of trustworthiness of the interpretation, which is to say that verification is neither automatic nor arbitrary. It is the arbitrariness of the position that one position is as good as another that repels us. Also its irrationality. To hold that one opinion

is as good as another is to simultaneously say it is valid to hold that opinion that some opinions are better than others is also a valid opinion.

The Hebrew model of truth requires time, history, for the verification process to unfold. But even to initiate the verification process, we must commit ourselves to the possibility of truth. For example, one must actually marry to allow the value of the marriage to work itself out in time; one must commit oneself to the research program to learn of its validity down the line. There must be criteria, therefore, that help us to judge the prospective truth of an interpretation of reality. I turn to those criteria now.

Evaluating Interpretations of Reality

The eras of knowing described earlier (knowledge as revelation and knowledge as experience) contained in their descriptions the criteria for evaluating the interpretations of reality. In the first era, the criterion was correspondence to revelation. In the second, the criterion was correspondence to experience, sensible experience. In both these ages, at least on the face of it, the criteria were outside the evaluator. That is, the criteria are what we call 'objective.' To describe knowledge as imaginative constructs seems to condemn us to the most subjective of criteria –imagination. But we have criteria that have been used to judge imaginative constructs through all the age, namely aesthetic criteria. I submit that the interpretations we cast across reality are art objects. Let me commandeer the support of two outstanding philosophers of aesthetic theory to make my case. Suzanne Langer describes art, the activity and the product, as 'the creation of perceptible form expressive of human feeling' (Langer, 1957, p. 80).

John Dewey's (1958) contribution to the case is that of questioning our ordinary notion of art. In his book, *Art as Experience*, he argues against limiting art to what we find in museums or concert halls. He tries to 'restore the continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art' (p. 3) and the more common, everyday forms we project against reality to deliver our experience. According to Dewey, the interpretations that we have traditionally called art are to all interpretations what mountain peaks are to the earth. 'Mountain peaks do not float unsupported; they do not even rest upon the earth. They *are* the earth in one of its manifest operations' (p. 3). So there are symphonies and superstring theories that interpret our existence. And there are theories of marriage and child-rearing that are perceptible forms expressing human feeling. Dewey says art is what it does with and in experience. Our interpretive schemes give us the form and content of our experience more or less artfully.

The equation of interpretations of reality with art is helpful for several reasons. First, we do not expect our works of art to deliver reality as it is, but we do expect them to deliver it in a way that makes us experience reality in transformed ways, in significant ways, in ways that change the manner of our seeing and hearing.

Moreover, the rejection of relativism is central to aesthetic theory. There is a long tradition of criticizing art works, of recognizing that one piece of art or one

performance is not necessarily as good as another. There is also a tradition that extends back even farther than art criticism that somehow the good, the true, and the beautiful are three variations on the same theme, three interpretations of the same reality.

Finally, there is a tentativeness in art criticism. In evaluating, we try to discover the worth or worthiness of an interpretation of reality whether it is painting, a religious ritual, or the plank of a political party. My thesis is that the aesthetic mode of evaluation offers the most fruitful approach to estimating the value of any interpretation. Aesthetic evaluation draws on our best thinking and our most cultivated sensibilities. It is, if you will, reasoned feeling and feeling reason, a focused application of or body-mindedness.

Part Two: Religious Doctrines as Art Objects

Few would disagree that the most comprehensive interpretation of reality is, by definition, religious. Religious conviction permeates all the elements of one's life. A disturbing phenomenon, therefore, is the fact that so many religious enthusiasts are using the correspondence theory of truth in their evaluation of the worthiness of their commitment. At times this takes on absurd dimensions. A legislator in Texas, faced with a bill to make Spanish a second official language in the state, is reputed to have said, 'If English was good enough for Jesus, it is good enough for me.'

Unfortunately, most results of this approach to religious doctrine are more appalling than amusing. The wars that have raged in the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first have been and are religious wars. Of course, cultural, ethnic, and tribal issues also feature in these hot spots, but almost invariably, the dominant difference between warring factions is religious. It is particularly disturbing because it seems that the major religions lend themselves wonderfully to a post modernist theory of knowing.

Orthodoxy and the Jews

'Orthodox' literally means straight or right *opinion*. *Doxa* was considered in Plato's discussion of knowing to be either conjecture or belief as opposed to *episteme* (knowledge) which was a grasp of reality as it truly is. The literal use of the term orthodoxy is quite consonant with the knowing as described in Part One. All we have to work with *are* opinions, conjectures, beliefs.

Historians and sociologists sometimes cite religion as the particular contribution of the Jews to our civilization. This valid conclusion flows from the fact that they proposed a model of God that became a criterion for what constitutes 'religious.' The Greek philosopher Xenophanes had employed an insightful touchstone to explain his ridicule of Olympic gods: *theoprotos*, 'that which fits the divine.' Yet earlier than Xenophanes, the Jews had recognized such a criterion as an elemental component of their relationship with the deities. God was not to be imagined, not to be named (Ex. 20:1-7; Deut. 5:6-11). This boundless concept of God allowed the Jews to

evolve the sophisticated notions of monotheism and omnipresence. It was also their dominating theology of a God who cannot be contained with genus and species definitions that allowed them to be freely anthropomorphic in discussions of God's relations with the descendants of Abraham.

We must thematise. We must speak. The perfect tribute will not remain silent. The difficulty lies in confusing the word with its referent. The construction of the golden calf illustrates the idolatrous nature of this confusion (Ex. 32:1–34). The brazen serpent, on the other hand, is healing because it is seen as a manifestation of God's power, but not God (Nm. 21:6–9). Similarly, the Jews (and Christians) are able to consider all the psalms as prayers although they are addressed to oneself, one's friends, enemies, all of nature, and God. God is not equated with any or all of these objects. Not even God. Had not God, when pressed for a name, answered, 'I am who I am'? Hebrews scholars tell us that this should be translated, not as the ground for a theory of God as being, but as the much more homely, 'Mind your own business!' God is that on which one cannot get a fix.

Orthodoxy and Christianity

Christianity preserves, reinforces and extends the Judaic intuition of a model of God than is beyond representation. In Christianity this insight is reflected in the fact that the major doctrines are composed of contradictions which might even be called oxymorons. The heresies of Christianity have always been attempts to eliminate the irreconcilables of the central doctrines. Heresies always make much better 'sense' than the finally hammered out dogmatic statements. The Arian and Docetist theses that Jesus was less than God or that God only appeared as man would have removed a number of problems that are only compounded in the attempt of professed monotheists to articulate a model of a triune God.

It seems that certainly one is on the right track when one conceives of God as the absolutely Other. When the participants of the Council of Chalcedon insist on defining the person of Jesus as truly God and truly human, what they actually do is say that even this most appropriate designation—'God as Other'—will not contain God.

Similarly, Nestorius proposed the reasonable compromise that Mary be ambiguously called Mother of Jesus. The Council of Ephesus, we might think rather blasphemously, counterpropounded that she is the Mother of God.

Unfortunately, most of these central pronouncements of the Church are called definitions. That is precisely what they are not. Definitions are the imposition of boundaries. What these so called definitions of the early Church did was to make it impossible to locate any boundaries or string any net of logic in which one could 'catch' God. They are closer to 'the sound of one hand clapping' of koans than they are to definitions. It is in this sense that they are appropriate models of God—dynamic because they incorporate contradictions, the kind of conflict that is literally fruitful beyond the capacity of any one age or all ages to imagine.

The best models suggest ever more than they can resolve. Nicholas of Cusa criticised the scholastic endeavor because it was based on the principle of non-contradiction: a thing cannot be and not be at the same time. Quantum physics suggests that the fifteenth century Nicholas was on to something. It is precisely the incorporation of contradictions that accounts for the magnitude in which contemporary physics is fruitful. Christianity incorporates outrageous contradictions: an imageless, unnameable God, one *triune* God, a God-man, a Mother of God.

An analogy that I have used that is not at odds with post-modernism and which picks up one of the use of aesthetic theory is to think of all great traditions as the score of a masterpiece *as well as* the musicians who performed the music, interpreting and playing or singing the score (Smith, 1995). What they make possible is our experience of the music. It is the music that is beautiful, the music we love. We may cherish the composer, appreciate the musicianship of the performers, acknowledge that both the score and performance are the conditions of experience, but it is still the music whose beauty arrests us.

As with all analogies, there are limits to how far this one can take us. A musical masterpiece is, after all, not a religious tradition. Yet similarities present themselves. For example, all religious traditions exist to put us in touch with God. It is the reality of God in which we are called to revel, not the tradition. The tradition is constituted by the score (scriptures, creeds, and rituals) performed by different peoples with different interpretations over the centuries. Practitioners of the tradition perform the score. The notations of a musical score may not kill, but they are certainly lifeless. They exist to be performed.

This analogy also speaks to the issue of relativism. Not every interpretation of the score of every performance is uniformly admirable. Interpretations that wander too far from original score court criticism from the musically informed; the grossly ill-performed is often recognized even by nonmusicians. Yet, novel arrangements or the use of new or different instruments can make it into the canon of good performances over time. The point is that there are standards of interpretation and criteria for performance that proscribe 'anything goes.' But they do not rule out the novel or an agreement upon new standards and criteria that the novel frequently generates.

The analogy of religious tradition with performed masterpieces illuminates the issue of dialogue between religious traditions. What musician worthy of the name is not open to hearing the beauty of other masterpieces or other interpretations of familiar works? In theory at least, musicians are open to critiques of their performance as well as critiques of their judgment about a masterpiece. Yet their very familiarity with the practiced performance of a beloved masterpiece is what can engage another to see the beauty they see, to hear the beauty they hear – perhaps to recognize it as masterpiece. The other may recognize that fact though never contract to perform the piece, embrace that tradition.

Pursuing this analogy can also shed some light on denominational affiliation and the issue of transcending cultures. One can treasure a particular masterpiece and a particular interpretation and performance for all kinds of personal reasons that are

no less providential for being personal. We are born into a particular time and place with its culture and its variations on our street and in our house. That fact both discovers and conceals the world to us. It conditions what foods we will enjoy, how we will be educated, whom we will marry, even if we will marry. The conventions of a culture shape what we will find agreeable and disagreeable, what we will pursue and what we will not notice, or having noticed, dismiss out of hand.

So musicians are more likely to treasure a masterpiece from their own culture. They are predisposed, as it were, to discern beauty there. As they grow in their knowledge of music and increase their skill in performing a masterpiece, they will continue to get fresh insights into its unique beauty if it can bear that sustained familiarity. If it cannot, they may look to another masterpiece for experience of the sublime.

There is no doubt that we are culturally conditioned to resonate to certain chords, certain kinds of melodies. But perhaps we make too much of that conditioning. If our cultures distinguish us, even separate us, our common humanity defines and connects us. If we eat different foods, we all have to eat, and we all need the same nutrients to sustain us, no matter their form. If we all have different languages, we all have language. If we all have different wedding customs, we all marry. And we all make music. And we all have gods-or at least ultimate concerns.

Cultural oppression exists where we try to make people take their nutrients in our form, speak our language, use our marriage customs, dance to our rhythms. We in the North Atlantic community, in this new millennium of the Common Era, sometimes forget that the notes that constitute the motif of our masterpiece come from an old Middle Eastern tribal melody. Its adaptability into thousands of languages and cultures stems from the fact that it strikes notes common to the human condition: birth, death, life after death, love and God. Regardless of what continents generated the musical score, it is the music we are called upon to appreciate, or in the language of Part One, 'the ooze through,' God (Smith, p. 4). Perhaps mystics must lead us through this century.

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THE RELEVANCE OF A WISDOM TRADITION

Gary Finlay

Director, National Centre For Religious Studies, New Zealand

Introduction

From time to time we hear calls for religious education to be ‘relevant’ to the needs and interests of students, or we hear of a particular topic in a curriculum or programme criticised for being ‘irrelevant’ to such needs. This chapter asks the question ‘what is meant by ‘relevant’ in the context of Catholic schools or, *mutatis mutandis*, schools of other religious traditions? What makes a religious education programme or lesson relevant?’ After a brief consideration of the semantics involved, the chapter considers how what is relevant for the religious education of young people in a Catholic school is to be decided, and who is to do the deciding. It argues that one function schools are peculiarly suited to is the transmission of knowledge, and that it is a mistake for them to downplay this role in order to concentrate on the immediate experience of students in the name of relevance. There is no suggestion that the life experiences of young people should be ignored, but rather that there is a balance to be found. For Catholic schools this means that there is still a place for a deliberate, judicious and coherent attempt to pass on key elements of the tradition, including specifically experiential elements such as forms of interiority.

‘Not to know what took place before you were born is to remain forever a child.’ (Marcus Tullius Cicero)

The Maori people of New Zealand have a concept named *turangawaewae*. It means literally, ‘a standing place for the feet’, and refers to the sense of place and security given to Maori by their sharing in ancestral land rights. I have argued elsewhere that the cultivation of a sense of tradition can help provide young Catholics ‘with their own *turangawaewae* – a firm base from which, in religious terms, they can come to grips with the often bewildering variety of beliefs, attitudes and values which confront them’ (Finlay, 1987).

To advocate an attentiveness to tradition is to court the response that that such an approach is not helpful as it is irrelevant to the interests and needs of children and young people who are focused on 'the now'. This chapter addresses that response. Underlying my case is a sympathy for Neil Postman's 'thermostatic view' of education (Postman, 1979). Postman maintains that it is the task of the school to act as a counter-balancing agent to the biases of the surrounding culture. That culture is heavily shaped by the electronic media, which have a vested interest in instancy, immediacy and the fashionable; they are 'hooked' on the present and the new. From a 'thermostatic' point of view, what teachers should be doing in such a situation is offering a different perspective. As Postman puts it, 'What has most relevance to students is what the information environment least provides them' (Postman, p. 131). It is with such underlying assumptions that I have chosen to consider questions such as; 'what do people mean, in the context of religious education, when they say that a topic or a curriculum is relevant (or not relevant)?' and 'who decides what is relevant?'

In the Oxford English Dictionary the first meaning given for the word relevant is 'bearing upon, connected with, pertinent *to*, the matter in hand.' If we consider the components of that definition in reverse order and take the 'matter in hand' to be religious education in Catholic schools, then the question that naturally arises is, 'What is it that has a bearing upon, what is pertinent to, or what is relevant to religious education?' Of course, it may be objected, the question is not, or should not be, 'what is relevant to religious education', but rather 'what is relevant to the young people who are students, or the consumers, or the victims (depending on the stance of the objector) of this religious education?'

This immediately raises the whole matter of the determination of curriculum and another question, 'Who decides what is to be taught?' Questions around the matter of relevance extend beyond the field of religious education into the general debate about the purposes of education – the realms of philosophy of education. Here it is very easy to get bogged down in the trenches, or to get lost in the no-man's-land between the various forces fighting under the standards of Plato, Rousseau, or Dewey, not to mention being ambushed by the followers of Foucault. Notwithstanding these risks, the questions at issue have such significance for religious education that they merit an answer, however contestable.

So, who determines the curriculum? Who decides what is to be taught? In the 1960s after the publication of A S Neill's book *Summerhill* (Neill, 1960), about his school of the same name where students decided what, if anything, they wished to learn, there were a number of books and experiments with similar types of radical or free schools in various countries. Viewed from the perspective of the early 21st century none seems to have had much lasting effect (Ravitch, 2000). Neither did the call for the abolition of formal schooling heralded by Ivan Illich's book *De-schooling society* (Illich, 1971). I am aware that there has been an increase in the number of families opting for home schooling in some countries, but their motives for doing this are generally different from Illich's reasons for de-schooling (Stevens, 2001).

If students are not to set the curriculum then who is to decide? In most places the decision is made by the State. Even where private schools exist, their students often follow curricula and seek qualifications set by governments. As far as Catholic schooling is concerned, there exist varying types of financial and structural relationships between state and Catholic education authorities. But whatever the particular relationship between the Government and Church schools, and however that affects the general curriculum taught in Catholic schools, (which is an interesting issue in itself) the Church generally controls what is taught in religious education. Whether the general curriculum or the religious education curriculum is school-based, or determined by diocesan or national guidelines, what is clear is that pupils or students are not deciding what is to be taught. Why this is so is not usually stated, but rather taken for granted, presumably on the grounds that ‘adults know best’.

One likely objection to this approach is that it is paternalistic. But as Mary Warnock writes:

There is an important sense in which all education is paternalistic. And in the sense of education as having the task of handing down ‘High Culture’, the element of paternalism is ineradicable. For the concept of high culture entails the thought that someone other than the person to whom it is to be handed down shall determine, or have a hand in determining, what is to count as worthy of that description; and not just any other person, but some person himself brought up to love and respect the culture...The canon in some form or other is crucial to the idea of education; and so one among educational needs is that individual children have to be introduced to this canon, the encapsulation of the culture in which they live (Warnock, 2004 p. 142).

If we apply this viewpoint to Catholic religious education the parallels are clear: the ‘high culture’ we are trying to hand down is the gospel as mediated through Catholic tradition. The assumption is that Catholicism is the culture in which our young people live and to whose canon they need progressively to be introduced. The understandable point that some, or many, children and young people in Catholic schools may have scant understanding of Catholic culture and are in fact immersed in other competing ‘cultures’ seems to me simply to reinforce the argument in favour of the need for schools to do what they can to introduce students to the canon. After all, we have religious tradition to thank for the very concept of canon in this sense.

How young people are given access to the tradition is important too. But there are many aspects to this. As Mary Boys explains:

Access is given in numerous ways. To provide access means to build bridges, to make metaphors, to build highways, to provide introductions and commentaries, to translate foreign terms, to remove barriers, to make maps, to demolish blockages, to demonstrate effects, to energise and sustain participation, and to be hospitable (Boys, 1989, p. 209).

All of this presumes that the teacher understands more than the student about 'the matter in hand'. As Kieran Egan points out in *The Educated Mind*, this does not imply that the teacher has to talk down to or patronise students because:

This interpretation strikes me as a peculiar way of looking at an inevitable feature of adequate teaching. If the teacher has no greater understanding than the student, it is hard to see how the role can be justified. The central sensitivity and skill of teaching consists in presenting knowledge to students in a manner that is most accessible and most stimulating to their developing understanding. What some might represent as patronising might more properly be seen as a matter of courtesy (Egan, 1997, p. 275).

Elsewhere I have made a case (Finlay, 2002) that an important part of what teachers in Catholic schools should be engaged in is mining the tradition for elements that can help students find meaning and identity. Or, in other words, in encouraging them to seek wisdom. In recent years there appears to have been the beginnings of a revival of interest in wisdom by philosophers (Conway, 2000; Honderich, 1995, p. 912) and psychologists (Sternberg, 1995). Whatever the case for other disciplines, teachers of religious education in Catholic (and other religious) schools are the bearers of a tradition, derived from an original revelation, that offers access to wisdom. Revelation after all means that things are not entirely obscure. The veil has been lifted to show a Way. Examples of such 'relevant' elements in the tradition are story, heroes and silence. These may also be seen as 'tools' for integration.

One important 'tool' is undoubtedly story or narrative. If people are to find meaning in life, they need consciously or otherwise to have a larger story or stories within which to place their own story (Rossiter, 1996), and this notwithstanding the postmodern suspicion of grand narratives. John Carroll has recently argued that Western civilisation is dying for lack of stories:

The spirit cannot breathe without story. It sinks to a whimper, deflating its housing characters, and condemning them to psychopathology—literally, disease of the soul. So it is for the young in the contemporary West—teenagers, those in their twenties, the hope and pride of their societies—and with them, swathes of their more self assured elders. A malaise holds them in thrall, struggling to live in a present without vision of any future, or connection to even the organic tissue of being, their own personal past (Carroll, 2001, p. 6).

Michael Warren's question, 'Who is telling the Stories?' seems to me to be one of the most productive for religious educators or parents to ask when considering how the viewpoints and worldviews of children and young people are being formed. In 'stories' I include films, television soap operas, situation comedies, song lyrics and advertisements. Warren maintains that 'the dreams of the young do not just 'happen' but are planned and produced by particular persons' (Warren, 1992, p. 3). Warren makes a very good case for Catholic schools to give their students the means to take a critical

stance, and to raise their consciousness about the messages being fed to them through the information culture (pp. 47–48). I think that schools and parents also need to keep before children and young people the big story of Christianity as well as other stories from scripture and the living tradition which help them in a positive way to ‘imagine the kind of person they wish to be’ (Warren, 1992, p. 3). In other words, to help them form an identity. The significance of the development personal identity and the issues it raises for religious education have recently been usefully explored by Graham Rossiter (Rossiter, 2001).

A second ‘tool’ closely related to that of story is the importance of heroes. Traditionally stories are often about heroes. Young people need heroes, either real or fictional, to help them in their formation of identity. Some of the heroes or idols presented to young people by popular culture are of dubious value, not to say positively harmful. But consider the popularity of ‘Harry Potter’ and ‘The Lord of the Rings’, old fashioned stories of good and evil, of heroes and villains. John Carroll writes of the importance of the bedtime story ritual:

It was then that the world was given magical shape, the child identifying with the fairy-tale characters and mythic heroes, enraptured by the story in which it is Me who rides through the enchanted forest and kills the fiery dragon, Me whom the glass slipper fits. The spirit soars: there is a place, a mission, a way of living, the monstrously huge world outside not so daunting. Once upon a time (Carroll, 2001, p. 9).

For Catholic schools an obvious source of stories of heroes and heroines is the lives of the saints. Richard Rohr and Joseph Martos explain why this is so. ‘Catholicism is not so much a history of ideas as a story of people, and the people we call saints are the heroes and heroines of that story. They are at once the paragons of Christianity and the paradigms of Christian living’ (Rohr & Martos, 1989, pp. 111–112). The ranks of inspiring men and women are not limited to canonised saints of course, nor to the ranks of Christians. Alert teachers will find many other stories of heroes and heroines, both historical and contemporary.

The saints are many and varied so they provide a range of models. What saints have in common is that they were prayerful. This brings us to the other ‘tool’ that Catholic schools can draw from the tradition to help students find meaning and identity today. It goes by many names; prayerfulness, interiority, inwardness, and meditation to name a few. Whatever it is called it is about enabling and allowing people to learn to ‘Be still and know that I am God’ (Psalm 46:10). Whatever it is called, no one should doubt its importance. Jerome Berryman explores the link between silence and imagination and concludes that ‘silence is necessary for human beings to communicate and create existential meaning’ (Berryman, 1999). Berryman maintains that because our busy postmodern culture is in danger of losing the ability to learn through silence, religious educators have a duty not just to their traditions but to humanity at large to foster the ability to know in silence. Berryman is not alone in this view. In the light of his experience of running courses in spirituality for university students David Tacey, too, has noted the importance of inwardness and

notes that 'religion need not be considered an obstacle to spirituality, but a resource for spiritual wisdom and insight' (Tacey, 2003, p. 103).

So, while communal worship and the other community dimensions of life in a school can and should be fostered, the element of truth in the often quoted phrase of Karl Rahner that 'the Christian of the future will be a mystic or nothing' must also be recognised.

The importance of not ignoring, but of going beyond personal experience in gaining access to a wisdom tradition is argued by Andrew Wright when he writes:

the cultivation of wisdom is dependent on our acquiring the humility to learn from others. Despite the claims of many post-Enlightenment philosophers, both modern and post-modern, we cannot simply rely on our own experiences in attempting to understand reality since all we are likely to end up doing is projecting a make-believe world that conforms to our own needs and expectations. We are not isolated individuals forced into a solipsistic self-reliance in our search for truth, but relational creatures whose understanding is dependent on our ability to learn from the insights of others by immersing ourselves in tradition and culture...Authentic freedom lies not in making arbitrary choices on the basis of personal preference, but in making wise and informed choices guided by the rich legacy of human wisdom (Wright, 2004, p. 61).

Wright goes on to argue for the virtues of what he calls 'critical religious education' which 'needs to combine a fundamental openness towards a range of horizons of meaning with the cultivation of a reflective wisdom capable of empowering students to negotiate their way through an increasingly complex cultural context.' Such an education, Wright argues, will strive 'to fulfil its transformational potential by opening pupils up to questions of ultimate truth and cultivating appropriate levels of religious literacy' (Wright, 2004, p. 221).

Wright's book, published in 2004, is entitled *Religion, education and post-modernity*. So, as might be expected, it is up to date and engages with all 'the usual suspects': Baudrillard, Cupitt, Derrida, Foucault, Rorty et.al. But there is a sense in which what Wright is advocating is in line with the educational ideas of two of the great Catholic scholars of the twentieth century, both of whom wrote books on education, and whose views now seem prophetic.

During the Second World War, French philosopher Jaques Maritain delivered a series of lectures at Yale University which were published as *Education at the crossroads*. As a Thomist, Maritain was concerned with ends, and in the style of the time, he described the end of education as 'to guide the evolving dynamism through which man forms himself as man.' He points to the fact that because humans are pre-eminently cultural beings 'endowed with a knowing power which is unlimited and which nonetheless only advances step by step,' they cannot progress in their own lives, intellectually and morally 'without being helped by collective experience previously accumulated and preserved, and by a regular transmission of acquired knowledge' (Maritain, 1943, p. 2).

Two decades later the cultural historian Christopher Dawson published *The crisis of western education* in which he considered the role of Christian education in a Western culture that was becoming increasingly dominated by economic and technological concerns while drifting away from its religious roots. Dawson maintained that ‘the vital problem of Christian education is a sociological one: how to make students culturally conscious of their religion; otherwise they will be divided personalities – with a Christian faith and a pagan culture which contradict one another continually’ (Dawson, 1961, p. 187). That, it seems to me, remains a valid description of our present situation.

Dawson continues, ‘We have to ask ourselves, are we Christians who happen to live in England or America, or are we English and Americans who happen to attend a church on Sundays?’ (Dawson, 1961, p. 187). Substitute your own country for England and America and this may still seem like a good question to ask yourself today.

In the same book Dawson identified the essential feature of what he called the democratic technological society, what today is more likely to be referred to in terms of late capitalism or globalisation. ‘The system exists primarily to satisfy the material needs and demands of the consumers, and these demands are artificially determined by the advertisers who are the agents of the producers, so that the whole system has a circular movement and feeds upon itself’ (Dawson, 1961, p. 197). More recently John Hull has written of the corrosive effects of the ‘money culture’ on spiritual traditions which limit their ability to pass on their ideals to a younger generation (Hull, 1999). Despite such difficulties, however, the classroom is one of the few places in our society that offers the opportunity of providing some critical distance from the commercialised, media-driven information environment and its related popular culture in which students (and all of us) are more or less immersed. As Leslie Savan points out, ‘the real masterwork of advertising is the way it uses the techniques of art to seduce the human soul. Virtually all of modern experience now has a sponsor, or at least a sponsored accessory, and there is no human emotion or concern...that cannot be reworked into a sales pitch’ (Savan, 1994, p. 3). Chris Ayres recently reported a manifestation of this trend in an article in *The Times*. He wrote, ‘The fast-food company blamed by many for an obesity epidemic and the spread of childhood diabetes in the US is offering rappers \$6.80 every time their snack inspired track is played on radio. McDonalds hopes to have several songs in the Billboard chart by the summer, according to *Advertising Age* (Ayres, 2005).

My contention is that we should think twice before drawing our measures of what is relevant to the religious education of young people largely from their own limited experience, which tends to draw heavily from the less-than-pristine springs of contemporary popular culture. We should have the good sense to ‘drink from our own wells.’ If anything, there is more truth today in Michael Warren’s insight that many young people are ‘imprisoned in a world of immediate experience’ than when he first wrote it (Warren, 1986, p. 104). One of the tasks of a teacher is to liberate young people, to help them break free of the media-constructed view of

reality that imprisons them. Teachers should not be limited by the young person's perception of what is relevant. Rather, they should be helping the young to raise their sights and to penetrate deeper.

Students need a framework of knowledge against which current concerns can be understood and evaluated. Thus, as I write there is a media ferment around the election of a new Pope. It makes sense to deal with this currently popular topic in the religious education classroom. But in the wider context of a young person's education the whole question of the position of the Pope in the Catholic Church, including the doctrinal, historical and ecumenical aspects should be part of what students learn regardless of whether there is to be a change in the incumbent Pope.

How all this is taught to students of different ages is of course very important. We can learn from the experience of the teacher who taught a class that Cardinal Wolsey aimed at the Papacy and read in an examination answer that 'Wolsey shot the Pope'. None of what I have been saying should be taken to mean that I am in favour of subjecting students to dull and boring lessons or 'inert knowledge'. Any good teacher will find ways to use the interests of their students as a 'way in' to a topic, but that is not to say that only what is of immediate interest to students is 'relevant' to their education as Catholics, or simply as human beings. As Mary Warnock writes:

whatever the source of the curriculum, the good teacher will believe in it, make what he teaches seem worth learning, and above all, never bore his pupils..... This is not a trivial point. Our poor record of staying-on rates at school is to a large extent explained by the boredom children experience there. They sense that what goes on at school is a kind of ritual in which they have no concern. The good teacher is the person who will break down this barrier of apparently pointless ritual, will make the curriculum accessible to the student, by whatever means, and will give him the satisfaction of short-term aims successfully achieved. These aims need not always be what would be called 'relevant', or directly related to the outside world. A good teacher can make a student think a subject interesting and worth pursuing, or a skill fascinating and worth acquiring, whether or not this knowledge or this skill is seen to be directly useful (Warnock, 2004, p. 162).

So this is not a call to be unimaginative or backward looking or to shut ourselves off from new ideas, whatever their source. Rather it is a plea to consider such ideas against the insights of our own sources of wisdom and to accept, modify or reject them in that light.

At the end of his book on faith and culture entitled *Clashing symbols*, Michael Paul Gallagher reflects on the importance in his life of the roots given him by growing up in Collooney, a small village immersed in the Catholic culture of Ireland. As he walks through the streets of Rome on his way to the university to

teach theology he looks at the young people around him and wonders about their religious roots or lack of them:

I sense them drifting on the surface of themselves: where do they have languages of wonder that might open towards God? I feel that they have much to give but few channels for giving. They seem to me more like victims of this moment in history than lost in laziness or egoism. I picture them, spiritually, as uncalled, unawoken, unreached by the Truth that for me is at the centre of Life. What is missing? That unity of culture that Collooney gave me, except that for them it would have to be chosen and created – because their more broken context leaves them (and me, in ways) more stranded from reality, from our true humanity, from God (Gallagher, 1997, p. 148).

If this is an accurate depiction of ‘la condition post-moderne’, and I take it to be, then the question that arises for me is, ‘What role can Catholic schools play in providing what is missing in helping to create the ‘unity of culture’ that young people might choose?’

Gallagher recognises that the village world is gone for most people. He asks, ‘Where will the children of the city find anchors and roots? In family experience which is the core stability in spite of cultural change? In encountering the stories and symbols of God through the Church? What experiences and images could liberate their hope and incarnate the gospel for them?’ (Gallagher, 1997, p. 149). I recognise the importance of Gallagher’s point about families, but that is not our concern here. But as far as stories, symbols, experiences and images go surely the Catholic school has a role in making these available to young people. I have already commented on the importance of stories but the importance of symbols should not be neglected. For as Andrew Greeley points out:

Recovering and rearticulating our symbols is part of the task of religious maturation, the journey from what Ricoeur calls the ‘first naivete’ to the ‘second naivete.’ It constitutes the phase of ‘criticism’ in our religious growing up in which we analyse and unpack our symbols, take them apart to see what they mean, and then put them back together again. It is that part of our journey in which we progress from the simple faith of a child to the sophisticated faith of the adult, from making the sign of the cross with holy water when we enter the church because everyone else does to understanding that we are renewing, however briefly and however occasionally, the exchange of promises made at baptism (Greeley, 2004).

The Australian epidemiologist Richard Eckersley’s recent writings on the psychosocial problems among young people have focussed on ‘their possible cultural sources, including rising individualism, and the young people’s particular vulnerability to the failure of modern Western culture to do well what cultures are supposed to do: provide webs of meaning that shape the way people see the world,

locate themselves within it and behave in it' (Eckersley, 2004, p. 162). My view is that this is what the Catholic school, (or any good religious school) is peculiarly able to do—help provide 'a web of meaning'. A Catholic school will to this partly by providing an experience of Christian community, and partly by teaching young people how Catholic tradition can provide meaning for their lives in the world of today and tomorrow.

As well as his research work, Eckersley gives many talks to varied groups on progress and well-being. He writes:

Of all the graphs and diagrams I use in my talks, the one that many people most respond to and request copies of (and one I am often hesitant to use because of its 'Sunday school' flavour) is a table showing St. Thomas Aquinas's seven deadly sins (pride, envy, avarice, anger, sloth, lust and gluttony) and cardinal virtues (faith, hope, charity, prudence, fortitude, temperance and religion) and their reversal by modern consumer society. I think this is because it encapsulates, simply yet profoundly, our predicament (Eckersley 2004, p. 264).

What are those us involved in religious education to make of that?

Both Gallagher and Eckersley, from quite different perspectives, see the importance of providing young people with hope. What better grounds for hope do we have than the Good News? Do we not believe that our faith gives us 'a reason to live and a reason to die' and that we are helping young people to come to the same understandings? Albeit that, in a school classroom, we will be doing this in an intentionally educational way rather than through catechesis *per se*.

Gabriel Moran has argued for a view of education that allows, paradoxically, for both growth and 'end'. He writes that

one way to summarise this picture is to say that education is about 'tradition,' that it is about the transmission of what is most valuable from one generation to the next. Such a contention flies in the face of most twentieth-century writing on education which denigrates tradition. I think that sooner or later tradition has to be restored and that its close associate, transmission, has to be saved from the numerous thrashings it has taken. There is an aspect of education that concerns the criticism of tradition; however, one cannot criticise it until one recognises that it is within us and all around us. Education does not hand on tradition; education is tradition, the process of handing on, and within the process the asking of critical questions about the past (Moran, 1989, p. 49).

Catholic schools can play their part in helping young people find both meaning and belonging. Religious education can help enable students to see their lives as part of a bigger story – what used to be called 'the greatest story ever told'. In fact a grand narrative *par excellence*, and what could be more relevant than that?

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THE MORAL DEMANDS OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE AND CHRISTIAN MORAL EDUCATION

Harold D. Horell

Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, Fordham University

Introduction

Rick is an engineer who works for a defence contracting company. After participating in an adult religious education program I offered he approached me and asked if I would serve as a sounding board as he reflected on his life. He raised specific questions about the potential for the immoral use of the weapons system he had just been asked to design, and wondered if he should request that certain design specifications for this project be changed. He then drew insight from Catholic Social Teaching in raising broader concerns about the morality and/or immorality of the defense contracting work he had done for the past twenty years and how he could use his professional expertise in ways that would be life-giving rather than death-dealing.

Roberta is a lawyer. A colleague and friend of Roberta's was suspended and later resigned from the firm for which they worked. He admitted to showing a serious lack of judgment in offering recommendations for a man whom he knew had faced multiple charges of serious sex offenses. This colleague approached Roberta for help and support. After Roberta found out as much as she could about the situation she sought my counsel as she struggled to answer for herself the questions: 'Do I have a moral obligation to try and help my colleague Tom, or is the morally best thing to do to step back at this point from my friendship with Tom? How might Christian faith serve as a resource as I strive to cope with this situation?'

(The above stories are based on actual events. Names and details have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved.)

There has always been, to some extent, an emphasis on Christian moral responsibility in the world, on the importance of Christians striving to connect their faith in meaningful and morally responsible ways with their everyday lives. As a pastoral minister and Christian religious educator, I have followed this emphasis

in the Church and would venture that today it is becoming more pronounced and has taken on a distinctive character – despite the fact that there is often greater moral ambiguity and confusion in our everyday lives. Generally, in our increasingly complex, multi-faceted postmodern era there is a tendency within the pastoral life of the church to move away from understanding Christian faith as providing an overarching conceptual and explanatory framework of knowing and to move toward a greater focus on faith and ethics in everyday life; that is, on faith as providing pragmatic, now-centred guidance for moral reflecting and acting (See for example, Grenz and Lowe, Eds. 1986; Diehl 1991).

In this chapter I propose that the church would benefit from a more intentional and concentrated focus on Christian moral education aimed at helping to enable people to meet more fully the moral demands of everyday pastoral life, the demands of Christian moral responsibility in the world. I begin by examining why pastorally focused Christian moral education has not become a major concern in the church. Then, to develop further and illustrate my proposal I examine from a religious educator's perspective two pressing pastoral issues in the church today: the problem of the specificity of Christian convictions in a world where not everyone is a Christian, and contemporary confusions about the nature of moral reflection. I write from the perspective of a Catholic living in the United States. While my analysis inevitably reflects my specific life context, I have tried to write in such a way that my perspective will resonate with Christians, and to some extent with people from other faith traditions, whose life situations are different from my own.

Moral Inquiry and Moral Education in the Life of the Contemporary Church

At the academic level, Protestant ethicists have devoted concentrated energy for over a century to exploring the implications of the Christian gospel for personal and social morality. In the same period of time Catholics have developed and refined the tradition of modern Catholic social teaching. Moreover, many Catholic moral theologians began to work closely with their Protestant colleagues after the Second Vatican Council as they sought to broaden the scope of moral theology by moving beyond a narrow focus on sins and the sacrament of reconciliation and developing an openness to exploring how Christian faith can shed new light on all of life's moral concerns (Long 1967; Gustafson 1978; Massaro 2000).

Protestant and Catholic ethicists have provided valuable resources for Christian decision making through analyses of complex issues of moral reasoning concerning health care, business and economics, law, the natural environment, war and peace, global development and other issues. (For a summary and analysis of literature on decision making from a Catholic perspective see McCormick 1981 and McCormick 1984.) They have also helped us to understand our deepest moral aspirations as persons through explorations of such issues as virtue and character (e.g., Hauerwas, 1974, 1981; Keenan 1996), and the connections between morality and spirituality (e.g., Billy & Keating 2001; Gula 2003). Still, there is one area that Christian

ethicists have not explored in great detail: Christian moral education at the pastoral level of church life. More fully, Christian ethicists have not tended to focus on everyday moral issues, like those voiced by Rick and Roberta in the above stories, with the intention of helping to enable Christians to address the moral concerns of everyday life in the light of Christian faith.

We can recognise one reason for the lack of attention to issues of Christian moral education at the pastoral level when moral reflection is seen in a theological perspective. Theology is, essentially, reflection about God, human experiences of God, and God's relation to humanity and the world. Pastoral or practical theology focuses primarily on the present life of the Church in the world. Included among the disciplines of pastoral theology are religious education, pastoral care and counseling, pastoral liturgy, and spiritual care. Pastoral theology is connected with but distinguishable from historical theology, which has a greater focus on the past, and systematic theology, which leans from the present toward the future and the achieving of greater systematic coherence and completeness in theological reflection. Christian ethics and social ethics are primarily pastorally oriented disciplines that also cross over into systematic theological enquiry. A primary paradigm within Christian ethics is to begin with specific pastoral issues, but to focus on offering as systematic and complete analyses of these issues as possible in order to provide resources that can be drawn upon when the same or similar issues arise in the future. One of the clearest articulations of this paradigm is presented in Potter, 1972.

Even though the scope of Christian ethical enquiry has expanded in our contemporary era the focus remains on moving from present pastoral reality toward systematic coherence and completeness. In most instances, Christian ethicists have not emphasised the importance of Christian moral education or maintained a focus on the present pastoral life of the church with the intention of helping to enable Christians to understand everyday moral concerns in the light of Christian faith. (See O'Connell 1998 for a noteworthy analysis of the limitations of the current paradigms of Christian ethics, and a proposal to address the lack of effective moral education in the church.)

Christian religious educators have devoted more attention to Christian moral education than Christian ethicists. In some instances they have been able to provide significant studies by mirroring the primary approaches and methodologies of their colleagues in ethic; thus, offering systematic analyses of complex moral issues as educational concerns (e.g., Toton 1982) or focusing on how we might develop our deepest moral aspirations in the light of Christian faith (e.g., Dykstra 1981). At other times, Christian religious educators have commented on the failure to bring the academic and ecclesial resources of the church to bear on issues of everyday morality. (See O'Hare, ed. 1983, especially the essays by Boys and Tom.) Religious educators also often integrate a concern for justice or moral issues into their approach to faith formation (e.g., Groome 1998, chapter 8; Moran 1981, chapter 11; O'Hare in O'Hare, ed. 1983).

Still, Christian religious educators could enrich the life of the church by focusing more intentionally on Christian moral education at the level of the pastoral life of the

church. This can be seen more clearly once we reflect on the areas of overlapping concern and difference between Christian ethics/social ethics and Christian religious education. As noted above, at a foundational level Christian ethics/social ethics and Christian religious education are pastoral disciplines. They are concerned with the present life of the Church in the world. Moreover, Christian ethicists and religious educators are both committed to promoting rigorous analysis and greater understanding of Christian moral concerns. The difference between the two lies in the fact that Christian ethicists are most concerned with distinguishing moral concerns from other aspects of life while religious educators, in striving to foster a holistic understanding of faith, tend to focus on the connections among religious convictions, moral reflection and action, and spiritual and liturgical/sacramental practices. Christian ethicists and religious educators also tend to differ insofar as they adopt divergent approaches in interacting with the broader faith community. Ethicists tend to engage in moral reflection and offer the fruits of their efforts as a resource for others to use. In contrast, educators foster abilities for understanding and reflection in people so that they can deepen their understanding of themselves and become more intentional in their relations with others and God.

Now, insofar as religious educators are influenced by the approaches and methodologies of ethicists they tend to be more concerned with systematic completeness in moral understanding and to move away from a focus on the dynamics of everyday morality. Religious educators have helped Christians to address world hunger, poverty and other social issues, integrate a sense of justice and the importance of morality more fully into the process of religious education, and provided general guidelines for fostering Christian moral character and virtue. Yet, they have not addressed fully the existential demands of everyday moral living. Moreover, even though Christian religious education often includes a concern for moral formation, the holistic focus of the discipline has tended to keep religious educators from devoting concentrated attention to ethical issues and, for the most part, recognising and responding as fully as possible to the increasing need for pastoral moral guidance in the church today. While religious educators have offered moral guidance in a variety of ways, they have not addressed fully, for example, the kinds of questions that are raised by the two cases given at the beginning of this chapter, questions about how we as Christians can draw from our faith convictions in meeting the moral demands of an increasingly complex, religiously plural and often conflictual world.

I propose that greater pastoral moral guidance for people seeking to make a fuller connection between faith and everyday moral life can be provided by an approach to Christian moral education that combines the concentrated emphasis on morality found within the disciplines of ethics with the educational concern for enabling people to become more intentional and directive in their moral lives that is found in Christian religious education. In the following sections I develop my proposal further through a discussion of two specific issues: the problem of the specificity of Christian moral convictions, and contemporary confusions about moral reflection.

Addressing the Issue of Being Specifically and Distinctively Christian

When Faustin Pipal was Vice-Chair of the St. Paul Bank for Savings he commented on a decision-making situation about where to locate the banks' headquarters as follows:

Either alternative was a risky business decision: pump millions of dollars of mortgage money into a visibly deteriorating neighborhood or move our corporate headquarters and develop new markets and a new client base. In the early 70s I drove through Oak Park, Illinois, every morning on my way to work; and it wasn't a pretty sight. Panic peddling was beginning. Banks had stopped making conventional mortgages. Landlords deferred maintenance on apartment buildings and home owners were losing their pride of ownership. My bank decided to stay. That was 20 years ago and our decision changed the face of that community and the future of our institution.

For Pipal that decision making process was as an exercise in Christian stewardship. Pipal noted that his understanding of 'the common good and a higher power,' and his efforts as a Christian steward to take into account the views of 'all the stakeholders – employees, customers, suppliers, and the community' – influenced the way he assessed the moral dimensions of that and other business situations (Pipal 1992, 1 and 4).

Pipal's words and actions illustrate a contemporary concern for linking Christian faith and everyday life. Today many Christians are turning to resources within Christian faith traditions for expressing their deepest moral sensibilities and intuitions. Still, many Christians are struggling to discern how moral notions grounded in specifically Christian perspectives can provide general moral standards or be the basis of moral dialogue in a world that is increasingly pluralistic, where people of a wide variety of religious and secular traditions interact and address together issues of public morality and common social concern. Concretely, in cases like that of Faustin Pipal when not all of those involved in discussion and decision making are Christians, we find ourselves asking: How can our specifically and distinctively Christian moral convictions become part of a process of reflection and action that often involves Jews, Muslims, secular humanists and people of other faith traditions?

The beginnings of a solution to the problem of Christian specificity can be found in a distinction made by David Tracy between the origins and effects of the resources of Christian faith traditions. Tracy first notes that classic works of art or literature, while they have their origin in a specific time and place, can have an effect or influence far beyond that time and place. For instance, Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* chronicles how a specific family responded to racial prejudice in a small, southern United States town in the mid-twentieth century. Yet, it is a classic of literature because its portrayals of integrity and respect for human dignity offer insight and inspiration for people living in diverse life situations. Tracy then suggests that some of the resources of Christian faith traditions can

have value beyond the boundaries of Christian communities and in some cases can become ‘classics’ when they help people in diverse life contexts express their deepest thoughts and feelings or express possibilities for human living that can be applied in a wide variety of situations. For instance, Pope Leo XII’s *Rerum Novarum* can be considered a classic of social ethics because its analysis of the rights of workers has affirmed the moral sensibilities of many people of good will and has been used to foster moral consensus among people of diverse religious, social and political backgrounds. Similarly, understandings of ‘human dignity,’ ‘the common good,’ and ‘solidarity’ that are grounded in Christian faith convictions have become basic moral principles within our society because they express the moral sensibilities of people, Christian and non-Christian alike in a wide variety of life situations (Tracy 1986).

To address the problem of Christian specificity fully we must also consider the relationship between Christian moral insight and the world beyond the church. In pastoral moral discussions we sometimes hear the expression ‘the church is called to be counter-cultural,’ meaning that the moral wisdom of the church is to challenge immoral practices in the broader society. Indeed, in addressing the harsh realities of prejudice, violence, and inequality a counter-cultural Christian moral stance has often been of great value. However, the church can never be purely counter-cultural. Christian faith is always expressed within culture and the moral outlooks of members of faith communities are always grounded to some extent within the culture or cultures of their everyday lives. Moreover, only in extreme circumstances would a faith community intentionally choose to maximise the extent to which it is counter-cultural. Most often Christians support political processes, social institutions such as the family and marriage, legal systems, and other social structures to the extent that they encourage the flourishing of life.

As a general guideline we can think of specifically Christian resources or resources grounded with Christian faith communities as offering moral insight that can be challenging, confirming, cautionary or some combination of these three (see Tracy 1986, 119–120). First, moral insights originating in Christian faith communities and then presented in broader social or public spheres may at times cause a ‘shock of recognition’ that reveals moral shortsightedness, insensitivity or immorality (Tracy 1986, 120). At such times, moral insight grounded in Christian faith may be challenging and prophetic. For instance, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, in which King discusses how his faith led him to travel from Atlanta to Birmingham to take part in an illegal protest against racial segregation, has become a classic of United States history, literature and culture. During his lifetime, King challenged oppressive structures in American society and people of many differing backgrounds who read King’s letter today are challenged to recognise unjust and discriminatory practices within their own societies.

Second, there are many instances in which the resources of Christian faith traditions affirm the authentic values of the broader society. For instance, some Christians, especially ordained and lay ecclesial Catholic ministers, regard the United States Catholic bishops documents *Faithful Citizenship*, a call to political

responsibility through participation in the political process, and *A Family Perspective on Church and Society*, which affirms the family as an important social institution, as having the potential to become religious and social classics. They not only offer moral guidance in addressing issues of political participation and family life, they also provide a framework for helping us as Christians discern when and how we are called to affirm the broader culture of which we are a part. For people outside Christian faith communities these documents and the ideas presented in them have at times led to greater understanding, appreciation and respect for the political process and family life.

Third, there are times when the resources of Christian faith traditions lead us to approach social movements and proposed social advancements with caution. For example, I once met a researcher doing work on tissue regeneration who discussed the ethical guidelines he followed in terms of a Christian understanding of 'sin' and 'human dignity.' His research had the potential to advance the technology needed for cloning mammals. Based on a sense of the potential for the sinful misuse of the medical technologies he was designing, he proceeded very cautiously in developing and publicising his research. He also noted that in his work with human subjects a Christian conception of respect for the dignity of the human person was his most important cautionary guideline in determining what he would and would not do. Moreover, the researcher recommended that his colleagues, Christian and non-Christians alike, use understandings of 'the potential for evil use' and 'human dignity' as moral principles to guide them in their work.

When we as Christians draw insight from the resources of Christian traditions in social and public forums of moral discourse we need to adopt an attitude of openness and respect toward our dialogue partners. To begin, we must always admit our own sinfulness and even the presence of sinful structures within the church. Hence, just as we as Christians may question the broader culture, we must expect to be challenged in turn. Indeed, there have been times when the church has been renewed by the moral wisdom of those beyond the church, such as the times in the past when the broader society challenged the church to renounce its support for the practice of slavery. Additionally, there needs to be a genuine respect for the religious and personal freedom of all people of good will who we as Christians encounter in the broader social world. The Mystery Who is God makes God's Self known in many ways, and often we are called simply to marvel at God's presence within the various cultures and peoples of the world. At the same time, our respect for others must always have an invitational quality. Some people, once they recognise the influence of Christian moral ideals in broader social and public forums, will want to explore more fully the source, and our Christian understanding of the Source, of those ideals. We must be open to inviting them into our faith communities and homes and to sharing our faith with them.

Drawing from the resources of Christian faith traditions in broader social and public discussions requires balance and practical, prudential judgment and discernment. Because contemporary life is ambiguous, complex and demanding it is impossible to pre-program or plan in advance for all the situations or even types

of situations that we are likely to encounter. Moreover, in our present, pluralistic postmodern era the complexities of life are increasing. Often times we as Christians cannot discern whether to challenge, confirm or proceed with caution, to push forward in making a point or to stop, listen and assess until we are fully in the midst of a situation. Additionally, when the moral demands of contemporary life are viewed in the light of any moral guidelines that can be offered, more questions are likely to be raised than answered. Thus, the church would benefit today from a greater focus on Christian moral education that enables people to develop the balance and perspective for practical, Christian moral discernment in everyday life.

Christian moral discernment involves identifying the movements of the Holy Spirit or the spirits of chaos and destruction regarding specific life choices in the here and now that have the potential to lead us toward or away from greater goodness and truth in our everyday actions and outlook on the world (Farnham et al. 1991; Futrell 1970). To foster Christian moral discernment we must first devote concentrated attention to understanding the dynamics of moral experience and the concerns that shape everyday moral living. Then, our focus must be truly and genuinely educational. It is not enough to provide resources that can be drawn upon when faced with a moral issue. Our focus must be on enabling; we might even say empowering, Christians to bring the resources of Christian faith traditions to bear in the here and now of everyday life. Overall, Christian moral education must 'enable,' not in a narrow and negative psychological sense, but with the purpose of helping people to recognise the possibilities and opportunities for living good and decent lives as Christians in our world today. It must 'empower' not in the sense of 'giving' power to people, but in the sense of providing opportunities to discuss practical issues and examples so that people will be better able to recognise the power they have to direct their lives in intentional and purposive ways as people of Christian faith.

Coping with Contemporary Confusions about Ethical Reflection

Morality is a code to guide conduct and character as persons interact with one another and the world of which we are all a part. However, sometimes our moral codes prove to be inadequate. We face new or especially complex issues that test our sense of what is right or morally good and who we are as moral persons. At such times our awareness of a moral issue is likely to lead into a process of ethical reflection. Ethical reflection involves thinking about, or the felt/affective apprehension of, the data of moral awareness, and questioning rather than accepting presumed standards of moral conduct and character. The goal of ethical reflection is to determine what should be done to resolve some present moral perplexity, or in cases of irreducible moral conflict or ambiguity to come to some understanding of how and why the moral issue arose. Ethical reflection may also enable us to articulate the qualities of character and virtues that persons, groups or even a whole society can and should embody if they are to embrace truly the moral code

they espouse. (My understanding of the dynamics of morality has been influenced significantly by the work of James Rest. See Rest 1983; 1986.)

Moral confusion can be unsettling, even unnerving. Ethical reflection strives to quench the fires of the turmoil caused by moral conflict and ambiguity. Today, however, our moral lives are sometimes torn asunder because of disputes about the nature of ethical reflection. In other words, ethical reflection, the process to which we turn for help in resolving moral uncertainty and conflict, has itself become a source of dispute and ambiguity.

In everyday life and philosophical reflection the dynamics of ethical reflection are sometimes seen as a process of critical distancing. From such a perspective, when faced with moral perplexity we should attempt to 'step back' from the immediacy of the present moment as we strive to affirm underlying values; come to a clearer sense of overarching moral law, duty or obligation; or gain a broader and more inclusive perspective, a 'bird's eye view' of the situation. From a Christian faith perspective, critical reflective distancing may enable us to step back from the specificity of our faith and moral convictions in order to be able to enter into dialogue with other Christians, secularists and people of other faith traditions as we strive to find common ground and reach moral consensus. However, even as we step back from our specific life situations, Christian faith may continue to shape the context out of which our critical reflective distancing takes place, and provide a moral self-understanding and religious intentionality that sustains our commitment to seek the morally good.

The Ideal Observer theories of moral philosopher Roderick Firth and his disciple, ethicist Arthur J. Dyck, provide examples of moral reflection as critical reflective distancing. They both argue that moral confusion arises when subjective factors cloud moral perception and moral data are not clearly recognised. They are interested in the characteristics of those who would prove to be ideal observers of moral data, observers who can distinguish accurately between 'really right' and only 'seemingly right' just as one might distinguish between 'really yellow' and 'seemingly yellow because of a particular lighting or background.' Firth and Dyck conclude that the ideal judge of moral data must be someone who can step back from the immediacy of a situation and be omniscient, omnipercipient, disinterested, and consistent. Dyck adds that Christians can think of 'the Ideal Observer analysis as a partial description of God.' He notes that Christians' love for God should include a 'commitment to imitate and emulate the qualities of an ideal moral judge' (Firth 1952; Dyck 1968; 1978; 1981; quote from Dyck 1968, 538).

Models of ethical reflection as critical reflective distancing have come under intense attack in our postmodern age. Today people often have a heightened awareness of the historical situatedness of all human knowing and doing. Attempts to appear disinterested and critically detached are often seen as either masking a will to dominate and control or as based on self-deceptions. Those who claim the objectivity of critical reflective distance are often greeted with suspicion and the belief that they must be trying to force their moral interests and agenda on others by adopting a pose of being above all particular interests. Or, they are seen as

sincere but misguided and perhaps even dangerous people who strive to force their moral perspective on others without realising that they cannot achieve complete, disinterested objectivity because they are blind to the ways their own perspectives are inevitably grounded in some specific time and place.

Various models have been proposed to replace understandings of ethical reflection as critical reflective distancing. Many, if not most, of these models incorporate a sense of moral reflection as involving what can be called narrative and relational skills. From a narrative and relational perspective, we should strive to overcome moral conflicts and confusions not by 'stepping back from' but by 'stepping into' situations. That is, when we face moral uncertainty we should look carefully at who we are as moral persons and community and ask how we want the moral story of our personal and communal lives to continue to unfold as we take the next step in our journey of life. From this perspective, we must also consider in our moral reflecting how we can maintain or strengthen the shared moral ideals and commitments that are the heart of our relationships with other people. From a Christian perspective, we can think of this model of moral reflection in terms of what Vincent MacNamara calls 'Christian rationality,' that is, moral reflection that is grounded in and strives to remain faithful to an understanding of the Christian narrative or story of faith and that nurtures our relationship with God and others (MacNamara 1985, 205–206).

The narrative ethic of Alasdair MacIntyre and the ethic of care of Nel Noddings provide examples of moral reflection as involving narrative and relational skills. Although there are significant differences between moral philosophers MacIntyre and Noddings, they envision the dynamics of moral experience in parallel and analogous ways. They begin with what can be called an understanding of the 'given' aspect of moral experience. More fully, MacIntyre accepts as a given fact of moral experience that it is our nature as human beings to have a narrative or story to give our lives coherence. Analogously, for Noddings the given element of moral experience is a universally accessible caring attitude grounded in the memory of the specific caring relationships that have sustained our lives (MacIntyre 1981; Noddings 1984).

MacIntyre and Noddings both reject the idea that moral reflection should be a stepping back from the given aspect of moral experience to an objective or universal moral standpoint. MacIntyre argues that human beings come to understand the moral life not by focusing on the narrative nature of human existence, but by attending carefully to the traditions and social practices of our specific, narrative life contexts. Similarly, Noddings argues that universal love is an illusion. She claims that we learn to practice morality as an 'active virtue' by first being in relationships with other people in which we experience the concrete realities of loving and caring and being loved and cared for. For MacIntyre and Noddings moral reflection is a skill that can enable us to face moral conflict or ambiguity in our relationships with other people and then move forward from where we are as we take the next step in the moral journey of our lives. (See MacIntyre 1981; 1992; Noddings 1984, especially 79–87.)

In addition to models of ethical reflection as critical reflective distancing and narrative and relational skills, there have been many attempts to combine these two models or find a middle ground between them. A well-known example of such middle-way models is found in philosopher John Rawls's theory of justice as fairness. Rawls argues that we need to critically distance ourselves from our particular standpoints in life during the process of ethical reflection if we are to overcome personal bias and achieve a measure of fairness. However, in recognising the situatedness of all human activity, Rawls contends that we can never reach a purely objective, disinterested moral viewpoint. Rather, Rawls calls us to recognise that for those of us living in modern, Western democratic polities, ethical reflection at its best can only help us to clarify and come to consensus about the underlying and shared moral values that we already hold in common and must affirm if we are to move forward in addressing public, moral issues (Rawls 1971; 1985; 1993).

Within academic circles today there are often fierce debates about the nature of moral reflection. Not only are those who advance an understanding of moral reflection as critical reflective distancing locked in debate with those who champion some model of moral reflection as narrative and relational skill, there are intense debates within each of these camps as well. For instance, I have heard academics influenced by MacIntyre stress the importance of narrative as a guiding category for moral reflection and suggest that too great a focus on relationships can lead to a negative sentimentality, while some advocates of an ethic of care have argued that MacIntyre's focus can be either too individualistic or supportive of the social status quo, and that narrative ethicists need to show greater recognition of the transformative power of relationships. Middle-way positions, including the theory put forth by Rawls, are usually attacked by both sides in the debate. Overall, while the academic debates about the nature of moral reflection can become acrimonious, they have advanced our understanding of the dynamics of moral experience.

Debates at the pastoral level of church life that hinge upon differing understandings of moral reflection have also often been intense. Yet, they often lead to a diminished sense of morality or have been destructively divisive. In reacting against the greater plurality and ambiguity of our contemporary age and the loss of clear paradigms for moral reflection, some Christians have turned away from moral reflection altogether and retreated into what Gerald Arbuckle has called 'pro-order' movements or stances (Arbuckle 2004, 163). Pro-order Christians attempt to bring order to contemporary moral confusion and circumvent the need for moral reflection by viewing all moral issues in the light of clearly defined moral convictions about what are judged to be key or litmus test moral issues. For instance, in the United States today there is an influential pro-order, conservative Christian movement drawing from both Protestant and Catholic faith communities that strives to overcome moral ambiguity not through moral reflection but by looking at all moral issues in the light of an absolute or nearly absolute anti-abortion stance, a narrowly defined sense of family values, and a cautionary approach to the development and use of new technologies, especially in health care. The pro-order stance may provide a sense of security, but because it is a non-dialogical stance it tends

to lead its advocates to separate themselves from public moral discourse with those with whom they disagree, and its adherents tend not to be critically self-reflective. Many who adopt a pro-order Christian stance tend to focus, sometimes exclusively, on the church as a counter-cultural and prophetic voice called to stand against the immorality of the world.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are various degrees of cynicism and skepticism about the possibilities for moral reflection and discussion. Some people today regard most moral proposals as attempts by a person or group to exert power over others. They tend to see pro-order movements in particular as attempting to impose the moral perspectives of specific Christian communities on all members of society by claiming that they are based upon universal moral norms and values. Others become discouraged about the possibilities for creating meaningful public forums for moral reflection among those who adopt differing models of moral reflection and action.

Still, there are increasing numbers of Christians who adopt a middle way between the two extremes mentioned above. On the one hand, they are often less concerned with overarching conceptual and explanatory frameworks of knowing and less likely to strive for a perspective of critical reflective distance that will guarantee moral objectivity. On the other hand, they resist the temptations of cynicism and despair. They continue to hold the conviction that morality is an important part of human life and that we can hope to find a sufficient measure of objective clarity in our everyday moral reflecting and acting. They are often, for the most part, groping their way forward as they strive to make meaningful and morally responsible connections between Christian faith and everyday life.

The church would benefit today from a greater focus on Christian moral education that addresses confusions about the nature of moral reflection. First, we must affirm the value and importance of moral reflection. We need to show how we must be morally reflective people in order to be able to respond to the complexities of contemporary life and to enter into dialogue with people of diverse backgrounds and moral perspectives in addressing pressing social and public issues. We must find ways to support people in resisting pressures to adopt a non-reflective pro-order moral stance or give into tendencies toward moral cynicism and despair.

Second, in discussing the dynamics of moral reflection in pastoral educational settings, we can begin by stressing the importance of both critical reflective distancing and narrative/relational skills. Consider as an example the story of Roberta told at the beginning of this chapter. On the one hand, Roberta needs to step back from her work situation and her friendship with her colleague, Tom. She will benefit by trying to gain a broader, more inclusive perspective so that she will be able to discern what the central moral questions in the situation truly are. On the other hand, Roberta also needs to step into the situation and reflect upon her current relationship with Tom and how she might see this relationship continuing to develop. In stepping into the situation she may also want to consider how her response to Tom could affect all of her work relationships. Overall, while there are a number of philosophical questions that can be raised about critical reflective

distancing and narrative/relational skills, academic inquiry has demonstrated the value of both, and their value can be further demonstrated in concrete pastoral settings.

Pastorally, knowing when and how to use critical reflective distancing and narrative/relational skills and how to relate the two is not something that can be pre-programmed. Again, it is something that requires practical, pastoral moral judgment and discernment. Thus, the analysis of this section affirms the importance of pastoral, Christian moral education. We can now add that the focus in Christian moral education must include enabling or empowering Christians to understand and make use of both critical reflective distancing and narrative/relational skills as dimensions of ethical reflection while at the same time affirming the value of ethical reflection in our lives.

Concluding Reflection

This essay has presented a pastorally reflective argument for the benefits of a more intentional focus on Christian moral education that helps to enable people to understand and respond to the moral demands of contemporary life. Based upon this analysis I suggest that there be three primary dimensions to Christian moral education in the church today. First, Christian moral education will help Christians relate their faith convictions in meaningful and morally responsible ways to everyday life when it is focused upon the discussion of concrete cases like those of Rick and Roberta and Faustin Pipal. Morality is a practical art. The embodiment of moral goodness and virtue, wise moral decisions and moral faults are all illustrated best by concrete examples.

Second, religious educators can foster a greater understanding of the dynamics of morality and encourage the development of intentional, responsible moral agency by highlighting significant contemporary moral issues. Within our faced-paced, ambiguous and increasingly complex postmodern times, there are a number of moral concerns that are frequently raised. I have discussed two of these issues in this essay, the problem of the specificity of Christian convictions in a world where not everyone is a Christian, and contemporary confusions about the nature of moral reflection. By discussing concrete cases in which these issues arise, Christians can prepare to address the issues if they come up in their own lives, and can develop the qualities and virtues that will enable them to live as people of moral integrity and character in their personal and communal lives today. Moreover, beyond the two issues discussed here, I suggest that Christians would benefit from discussing cases that address the increasing moral pluralism at the most fundamental levels of moral understanding and action today, and cases that explore limit situations, that is, situations in which Christians need to move beyond dialogue to confrontation with immorality and moral evil. The latter is important today because it is more difficult to determine when we encounter limit situations and how we can faithfully and effectively cope with them as Christians as the world becomes more complex.

Third, educators involved in Christian moral formation need to be in dialogue with the academic resources on morality and Christian religious education and be able to draw from these resources as they explore issues of Christian moral responsibility in the world. On the one hand, the studies on morality in philosophy, theology, psychology and other disciplines can provide a greater understanding of the dynamics of moral experience and provide a theoretical foundation for the discussion of moral issues arising in specific situations. On the other hand, placing Christian moral education within the broader context of Christian religious education can help to ensure that our conception of the moral life as Christians is seen in relation to our understanding and worship of God. It can help us to avoid the temptation to reduce faith to ethics and Jesus to a moral teacher. However, if Christian moral education is to be of the greatest possible benefit to the church today, we must be certain in drawing upon academic resources, to maintain a pastoral focus, a focus on the moral demands of contemporary life. Our efforts must be directed toward enabling Christians to be more fully open to welcoming and working to bring about the fuller realization of God's Reign, God's Peace and Justice, as we address the complexities and ambiguities of the postmodern age.

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THE INTEGRAL PHILOSOPHY OF KEN WILBER AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Anta Filipšone

Systematic and Practical Theology, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

Introduction

This essay is an attempt to bring to the attention of religious and spiritual educators the work of a contemporary Northern American philosopher Ken Wilber, whose most recent writings include *Integral Psychology* (Wilber, 1999a), *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (Wilber, 2000b), *The Marriage of Sense and Soul* (Wilber, 2001a), and *A Theory of Everything* (Wilber, 2001b). Having initially started as a transpersonal psychologist, over the years Wilber has considerably expanded the scope of his interests. Today he is known as the founder, leader and most prominent representative of the integral approach to philosophy, cultural studies, psychology, and spirituality (see *Ken Wilber: Thought as Passion* [Visser, F. 2003] also websites www.wilber.shambhala.com, www.integralinstitute.com, www.integralnaked.org).

Due to the limited space it is not possible to provide here a complete overview of Wilber's work or to explore all the potential consequences of his views for the theory and practice of religious education. My aim is more modest: to offer the shortest possible introduction into the heart of Wilber's theory—the four quadrant framework—and to initiate a discussion on the possibility of its application in the field of religious education.

The Integral Approach

There are several reasons why Wilber describes his philosophy as integral. Firstly, Wilber wants to provide an integral or 'holistic' map of the world. In the Introduction to his magnum opus *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* Wilber writes that his main aim is to offer 'a holistic philosophy for a holistic Kosmos: a world philosophy, an integral philosophy,' which would suggest that 'the world really is one, undivided, whole, and related to itself in every way' (Wilber, 2000a, p. x).

Secondly, Wilber believes that with the help of his main heuristic device—the four quadrant framework—he has integrated the enduring insights of premodern, modern, and postmodern worldviews. An essential feature of this synthesis is a proposal at integration of science and religion or, to borrow the title from one of his books, at ‘the marriage of sense and soul’ (Wilber, 2001a).

Thirdly, Wilber’s approach is integral in that it ‘attempts to honor and include as much research as possible from the largest number of disciplines in a coherent fashion’ (2001b, 2). This also includes the integration of the Eastern and Western approaches to philosophy, psychology and spirituality. Jack Crittenden describes the scope of Wilber’s synthesis as follows:

Wilber has provided a coherent and consistent vision that seamlessly weaved together truth-claims from such fields as physics and biology; the ecosciences; chaos theory and the systems sciences; medicine, neurophysiology and biochemistry; art, poetry, and aesthetics in general; developmental psychology and a spectrum of psychotherapeutic endeavors, from Freud to Jung to Piaget; Great Chain theorists from Plato and Plotinus in the West to Shankara and Nagarjuna in the East; the modernists from Descartes to Locke to Kant; the Idealists from Shelling to Hegel; the postmodernists from Foucault and Derrida to Taylor and Habermas; the major hermeneutic tradition, from Dilthey to Heidegger to Gadamer; the social systems theorists from Marx and Comte to Parsons and Luhmann; the contemplative and mystical schools of the great meditative traditions, East and West, in the world’s major religious traditions. All this is just a sampling (Crittenden, 1997, pp. viii–ix).

Fourthly, Wilber is interested in integration of the scientific endeavor with two interrelated kinds of praxis—political and spiritual, for he is well aware that ‘Even if we possessed the perfect integral map of the Kosmos, a map that was completely all-inclusive and unerringly holistic, that map itself would not transform people’ (Wilber, 2001b, p. 55).

And finally, for Wilber the term ‘integral’ also implies a critical stance toward ‘those approaches that are, by comparison, partial, narrow, shallow, less encompassing, less integrative’ (Wilber, 2001b, p. 2). This critique manifests both in the content of Wilber’s work and at times in its polemical tone. Even though Wilber (2001b) repeats that his work should not be regarded ‘a fixed or final theory’ (p. xiii), because ‘the holistic quest is an ever-receding dream, a horizon that constantly retreats as we approach it’ (p. xii), nevertheless he also believes that:

A little bit of wholeness is better than none at all, and integral vision offers considerably more wholeness than the slice-and-dice alternatives. We can be more whole, or less whole; more fragmented or less fragmented; more alienated or less alienated; and integral vision invites us to be a little more whole, a little less fragmented, in our work, our lives, our destiny (ibid).

In the following sections I will focus on two aspects of Wilber's integral philosophy—the integration of the essential features of premodernity, modernity, and postmodernity, and the integration of science and religion. The last section will be devoted to a discussion of the possible contribution of the integral approach to contemporary religious education, using as the main partner of conversation from the religious education side the critical model of religious and spiritual education developed by Andrew Wright in Great Britain.

Integration of Premodernity, Modernity and Postmodernity

The Premodern Heritage—The Great Hierarchy

The cornerstone of Wilber's integral philosophy is the understanding of reality as the Great Hierarchy of Being and Knowing (Figure 1), i.e. as a soft, nested hierarchy where each level is a whole-part (holon) simultaneously enveloping the predecessor and being enveloped by the successor: 'The Kosmos is a series of nests within nests within nests indefinitely, expressing greater and greater holistic embrace—holarchies of holons everywhere' (Wilber, 2001b, p. 40).

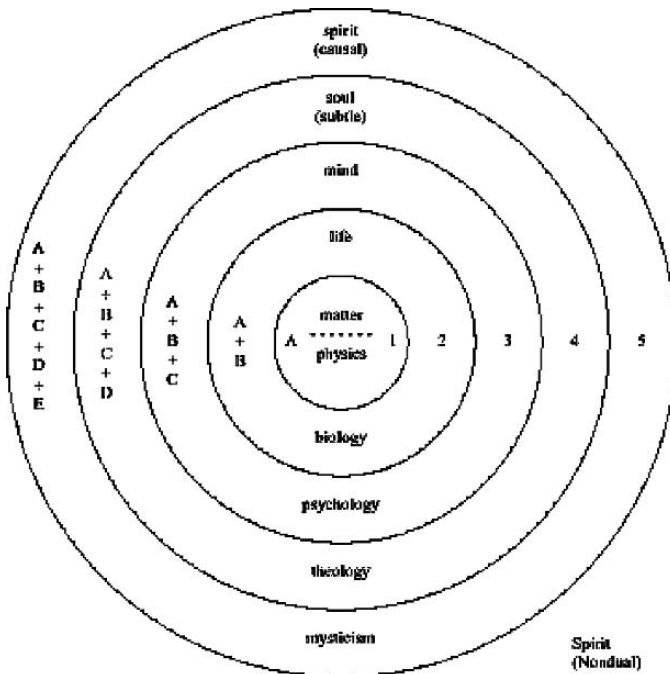


Figure 1. The Great Nest of Being and Knowing

The Great Hierarchy is, of course, a modified version of the Great Chain of Being and Knowing, which, according to Wilber, is the essential heritage of premodernity (cf. Lovejoy, 1964; Smith, 1976). Being aware of numerous criticisms of the hierarchical view of reality implied in the Great Nest, Wilber nevertheless insists that the notion of hierarchy is crucial for the understanding of wholeness, for ‘unless you organise the parts into a larger whole whose glue is a principle higher or deeper than the parts possess alone—unless you do that, then you have heaps, not wholes’ (Wilber, 2000b, p. 24). At the same time for Wilber, the Great Nest is not a collection of ‘permanently fixed and unchanging essences’ (Wilber, 1999a, p. 443), but rather ‘a great *morphogenetic field* that provides a *developmental space* in which human potentials can unfold’ (Wilber, 1999a, p. 459).

Another important feature of the Great Hierarchy is its evolutionary unfolding ‘toward increasing complexity and awareness’ (Wilber, 1999e, p. 334). As for Hegel, for Wilber evolution is an essentially spiritual process. In Wilber’s view, the Spirit is simultaneously the highest level of the Hierarchy and the Ground of each level:

The Absolute is both the highest state of being and the ground of all being; it is both the goal of evolution and the ground of evolution; the highest stage of development and the reality or suchness of *all* stages of development; the highest of all conditions and the Condition of all conditions; the highest rung in the ladder *and* the wood out of which the entire ladder is made. Anything less than that *paradox* generates either pantheistic reductionism, on the one hand, or wild and radical transcendentalism, on the other (Wilber, 1999e, p. 418).

The major problem, though, with the pre-modern way of thinking is its failure to differentiate the cultural values spheres of art, morals, and science (Wilber, 2001b, p. 69). Consequently, the Romantic U-turn back to the pre-modern times in search for genuine holism is mistaken, for premodernity does not presuppose a holistic integration of previously differentiated spheres, but ‘simply a fusion of spheres that robbed each of its autonomy and dignity’ (Wilber, 2001a, p. 48). In Wilber’s view, the road toward a genuinely holistic paradigm lies forward to differentiation and subsequent integration of the Big Three rather than back to the state of their fusion. In other words, the Great Nest has to be modernised and postmodernised due to a sincere acknowledgment of the need ‘to recognise the importance of cultural background, relativistic surface structures and contexts, correlations with modern scientific discoveries, sensitivity to minorities..., the importance of pluralistic voices and so on’ (Wilber, 1999a, p. 576).

The Modern Heritage—The Differentiation of the Values Spheres

Wilber proposes to modernise the Great Nest by differentiating *within it* the ‘Big Three’ cultural spheres of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True (or culture, self, and nature; or We, I, and It) and filling in the traditional structure of matter, life, mind,

soul, and spirit with the findings of contemporary sciences of evolutionary biology, psychology, sociology and cultural studies. For convenience, he extended the three spheres to four by dividing the sphere of the True/nature/It into two parts—It and Its, where It stands for singular organisms, Its—for systems. Thus Wilber arrived at the basic structure of his four quadrant framework (Figure 2)—a map of the psychological (Upper Left), physical and biological (Upper Right), ecological and social (Lower Right), and cultural (Lower Left) aspects of the evolution, where each aspect correlates and actually co-evolves with all the others, ‘for the simple reason that you cannot have an inside without an outside, or a plural without a singular’ (Wilber, 2001a, p. 73)

The UR quadrant of the framework refers to the scientific account of the individual components of the universe: atoms, molecules, cells, and multicellular organisms. The LR quadrant refers to the scientific account of systems of individual holons. Together these two quadrants (UR+LR) comprise objective exteriors of

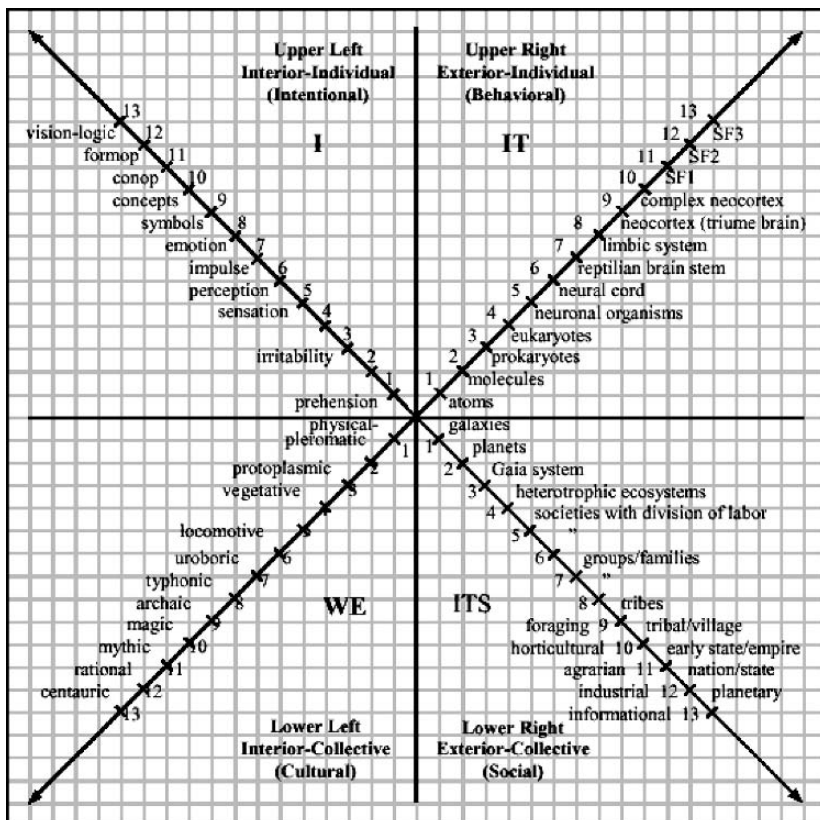


Figure 2. The Four Quadrant Framework

both individuals and systems: the empirical world of the objective nature, of science and technology, and of propositional truth. In short, these quadrants stand for the third-person perspective and the it-language of empirical science.

The UL quadrant is a holarchy of development of interior awareness in individuals. It refers to consciousness, subjectivity, and self. This quadrant stands for the first-person perspective and the I-language. The LL quadrant refers, then, to the second person perspective and the We-language: worldviews, ethics, culture, i.e. to the inter-subjective forms of awareness that provide the context for development and well-being of individual awareness. Together these two quadrants (UL+LL) comprise subjective interiors of both individuals and systems (Wilber, 2001a, chapter 5; 2001b, chapter 3; 1999a, chapter 5; 2000b, chapter 4).

Of course, the four quadrant framework as presented in Figure 2 is a schematic oversimplification of very complex issues. In each quadrant, where we see only one line of development, there should be in reality many of them. Thus, for example, in the book *Integral Psychology* (Wilber, 1999a) Wilber discusses the full 'integral cartography' of the UL quadrant of interior individual development and argues that it has to include the following elements:

- Numerous *streams* of development that unfold from *wave* to *wave*.
- Multiple *states* of consciousness, including natural as well as altered and meditative states.
- Numerous *types* of consciousness, including gender types, personality types, etc.
- The impact of *organic* (UR) factors
- The impact of *social* (LR) factors
- The impact of *cultural* (LL) factors
- The importance of *the self* as the navigator and the centre of gravity acting to bind the multiple waves, streams, states, and quadrants into a unified organization.

Furthermore, a full cartography of this quadrant also includes the four spiritual or transpersonal waves that follow the rational or personal waves studied by mainstream psychology. These higher waves, as delineated by Eastern spiritual systems, are the psychic (the nature mysticism), the subtle (the deity mysticism), the causal (the formless mysticism), and the nondual (the nondual mysticism). Wilber maintains that these stages can either emerge as permanent structures following the completion of personal development, or can be peak experienced at any of the previous stages (Wilber, 1999a, pp. 444–448).

In a similar way, there can be produced full cartographies of other quadrants. It must be stressed, though, that the integral view *does not* presuppose that the overall development even within one quadrant, let alone the development across all quadrants, follows linear or sequential pattern: 'many of the streams develop at their own rate, with their own dynamic, in their own way. A person can be at a relatively high level of development in some streams, medium in others, and low in still others. Overall development, in other words, can be quite uneven' (Wilber, 2001b, p. 44).

The Contribution of Postmodernity—Constructivism, Contextualism, Integral-Aperspectivism

In addition to the synthesis of the essential insights of premodernity and modernity, the four quadrant framework also allows for the integration of what Wilber regards to be the three moments of truth in postmodernism, namely:

- constructivism—the idea that ‘reality is not in all ways pregiven, but in some significant ways is a construction, an interpretation’ (Wilber, 1999a, p. 595). In the context of the four quadrant framework it simply means that all holons have an exterior surface that can be measured (Right Hand quadrants) and an interior depth that has to be interpreted (Left Hand quadrants).
- contextualism—the idea that ‘meaning is context-dependent, and contexts are boundless’ (Wilber, 1999a, p. 595). According to Wilber, this is another way of saying that ‘reality is composed of holons within holons indefinitely, with no discernible bottom or top’ (Wilber, 1999a, p. 598).
- integral-aperspectivism—acknowledgement of the need for a multiperspective or, in integral terms, all-level, all-quadrant (AQAL), approach to reality (Wilber, 2001a, p. 131).

Wilber develops the last point in two directions: scientific and practical. In the context of scientific research, Wilber attributes much of the fragmentation of sciences to the fact that too ‘many scholars, specialising in only one quadrant, deny importance or even existence to the others’ (Wilber, 2001a, p. 73). Hence the first major task of the integral philosophy is to harmonise the sciences of all levels in each quadrant and develop AQAL approaches that would ‘investigate the various phenomena in each of the four quadrants—subjective states, objective behavior, intersubjective structures, and interobjective systems—and correlate each with the others, without trying to reduce them to the others’ (Wilber, 2001a, p. 207).

However, as already mentioned in the beginning, Wilber is well aware that it is not enough just to construct a more comprehensive scientific map of reality—the integral theory has to put into integral practice. Hence the second, practical task of the integral philosophy—to propose better ways to *change the mapmakers*, i.e. to develop AQAL approaches to solving practical problems in life—from political to economic, to social, to ecological, to educational, to spiritual, etc. For Wilber this means that the scientific enlightenment or integral thinking has to marry the political enlightenment or integral social action and the spiritual enlightenment or integral spiritual practice.

The integral politics, according to Wilber, would have to follow *The Prime Directive*, which demands to ensure the health of the entire spiral, not preferential treatment for any one level or stream or realm (Wilber, 2001b, p. 56). The Directive reflects one of the basic ideas of the integral philosophy: ‘each level of consciousness and wave of existence—is, in its healthy form, *an absolutely necessary and desirable element* of the overall spiral’ (ibid). In the book *A Theory of Everything* Wilber provides specific examples of how the Prime Directive can and is already being applied to politics, business, medicine, ecology, etc. (Wilber, 2001b, chapter 5).

However, one cannot be engaged effectively in integrally informed professional and social practice unless one possesses an integral consciousness. To foster the emergence of the integral consciousness is the task of integral spirituality, which is in short described by Wilber as ‘exercising physical, emotional, mental and spiritual waves in self, culture, and nature’ (Wilber, 2001b, p. 138). While the program of integral spirituality certainly includes and encourages specific spiritual activities such as various kinds of meditation, they are regarded insufficient unless complemented by physical (UR), emotional and mental (UL), ecological and social (LR), and intersubjective and cultural (LL) activities—all united by a conviction that ‘The more categories engaged, the more effective they all become’ (Wilber, 1999a, p. 546).

With this brief overview of the four quadrant framework in the background we can now turn to Wilber’s views on religion and then draw some consequences for religious education.

Integration of Science and Religion

The integration of science and religion is a major theme in all of Wilber’s writings and also the particular topic of the book *The Marriage of Sense and Soul* (Wilber, 2001a). In fact, reconciliation of science and religion is one of the most important functions of the four quadrant framework, for according to Wilber, the main challenge faced by contemporary religion is precisely to ‘integrate the Big Three value spheres of self, culture, and nature, not merely attempt to dedifferentiate them in a premodern slide or deconstruct them in a postmodern blast’ (Wilber, 2001a, p. 139). In other words, for Wilber the main problem is to show how religion can ‘stand up to scientific authority’ (ibid). And the first step Wilber proposes to take toward a solution is to distinguish between several meanings of both terms—‘religion’ and ‘science,’ and to decide what exactly can be integrated.

Speaking of religion, Wilber does not differentiate sharply between religion and spirituality, as it is fashionable today. Instead he prefers to speak of narrow, or shallow, or translative, or legitimate, or horizontal religion/spirituality on the one hand, and of broad, or deep, or transformative, or authentic, or vertical religion/spirituality, on the other hand:

Narrow religion, then, is simply those beliefs, practices, customs, experiences, and traditions that help one to translate and embrace the worldview of any given wave; whereas deep religion involves those practices, techniques, and traditions that help one to transform to the higher, transrational, transpersonal waves. (Wilber, 2001b, pp. 159–160, Note 17)

Most premodern religious traditions offer both, yet Wilber focuses primarily on the second, vertical dimension of religion, since in his opinion it promises most in regard to reconciliation with science.

Similarly, in the case of science, Wilber also distinguishes between the narrow or Right Hand sciences, which are based on the exterior, physical, sensorimotor world,

and the broad or Left-Hand sciences, which study subjective and inter-subjective aspects of human consciousness. Obviously these different realms—physical and mental—call for different specific methodologies of investigation. Nevertheless, Wilber maintains that what unites all good science, whether narrow or broad, is the general scientific methodology consisting of three basic strands:

- A practical injunction or exemplar
- An apprehension, illumination, or experience
- Communal checking (either rejection or confirmation) (Wilber, 2001b, p. 75)

It is on the basis of this general methodology that Wilber sees the possibility of reconciliation between deep religion/spirituality and science. If the same basic methodological strands are applied to the sensorimotor and mental realms, why not apply them, asks Wilber, to the spiritual realm either? Why not to investigate scientifically the psychic, the subtle, and the causal waves of existence? After all, is it not what is already happening in deep religion/spirituality? Wilber's answer to these questions is positive, for in his opinion, the crucial difference between the narrow and the broad religion is that while the former is concerned with beliefs, the latter is primarily grounded in certain practices or *injunctions*:

And where the exemplar in physical sciences might be a telescope, and in the human sciences might be linguistic interpretation, in the spiritual sciences the exemplar, the injunction, the paradigm, the practice is: meditation or contemplation. It too has its injunctions, its illuminations, and its confirmations, all of which are generally repeatable, verifiable or falsifiable—and all of which therefore constitute a perfectly valid mode of knowledge acquisition (Wilber, 1999d, p. 143).

Thus, deep or broad religion can be viewed in part as a spiritual science, which 'involves the *direct investigation of the experiential evidence disclosed in the higher stages of consciousness development*' (Wilber, 2001b, p. 77). Only in part, because deep religion/spirituality also involves the art and morals of the higher realms, with their own specific methodologies and validity claims (Wilber, 2001b, pp. 156–157, Note 15). This way, Wilber believes, the major obstacles to the integration of science and religion are lifted, and 'The contemplative and phenomenological sciences (the broad sciences of interiors) can thus join hands with *good science* for direct experiential data in the Upper Left and with *narrow science* for correlative data in the Upper Right' (Wilber, 2001b, p. 78).

In other words, what Wilber asks of science and the modern worldview for the sake of reconciliation with religion/spirituality is basically to expand its scope 'from narrow empiricism (sensory experience only) to broad empiricism (direct experience in general)' (Wilber, 2001a, p. 161). And what is asked from the other side—any premodern religious tradition—is that in the conversation with science it primarily 'emphasises its heart and soul and essence; namely, direct mystical experience and transcendental consciousness' (Wilber, 2001a, p. 167).

At the same time, Wilber stresses that he is not advocating a new form of universal homogenised spirituality: 'The Great Chain is simply the skeleton of any individual's approach to the Divine, and on that skeleton each individual, and each religion, will bring appropriate flesh and bones and guts and glory' (Wilber, 2001a, p. 204).

Implications for Religious Education

Wilber himself does not discuss the topic of religious education, yet even on the basis of this brief introduction, some conclusions can be drawn. Thus, Wilber's distinction between the translative and transformative religion obviously leads to the distinction between translative and transformative forms of religious education. While the first is concerned with learning to exercise the eye of the flesh via empirical investigation of the phenomenon of religion and the eye of the mind via rational inquiry into the issue of ultimate truth, the second aims at the transformation of consciousness to the transrational waves of being and knowing via training the eye of the spirit in meditation and contemplation. None of these eyes can be reduced to others, and so cannot be different forms of religious education—studies in sociology of religion cannot replace studies in philosophy and theology, and neither sociological studies, nor philosophical and theological studies, can replace contemplative education—and vice versa (cf. Berryman, 1992). Wilber writes, 'it is my feeling that the most important thing a comprehensive or integral paradigm can do is try to avoid the category errors: confusing the eye of flesh with the eye of mind with the eye of contemplation' (Wilber, 1999e, p. 185).

One of such widespread category errors, according to Wilber, is a tendency to confuse the emotional aspect of the eye of the flesh with the eye of the spirit and consequently to elevate emotion above reason in religion. Wilber attributes this category error to uncritical compliance with the Romantic philosophy and particularly to what he calls *pre/trans fallacy*—the characteristic Romantic confusion of emotional prerationality with transrationality (Wilber, 1999e, chapter 7). Since the integral philosophy associates authentic religion with the postrational rather than prerational waves of development, it does not view reason per se as a threat to religion and spirituality. For Wilber, reason 'is a *pro-authentic-religious* trend by virtue of being transmythic or post-mythic and *on its way* to ...higher levels of structural adaptation' (Wilber, 1999b, p. 87). Thus, in the integral perspective, 'Transrationality, unlike prerationality, happily incorporates the rational perspective, and then adds its own defining characteristics; it is thus *never* antireason, but, in a friendly way, transreason' (Wilber, 2001a, p. 92). Consequently, the overall task of religious education should certainly include fostering the intellectual development in students, for only after 'reason has emerged and consolidated, consciousness can continue to grow and develop and evolve, moving into transrational, transpersonal, and supraindividual modes of awareness' (Wilber, *ibid*).

Hence, integrally informed religious educators are likely to support the legitimate concern of contemporary critical educators, such as Wright (1998; 2000a;

2000b; 2004), about the undue stress on 'spiritual emotivism detached from critical reflection' (Wright, 2000a, p. 76) in certain forms of contemporary religious and spiritual education based on the Romantic and postmodern metanarratives. In fact, it can be argued that critical forms of religious education, such as the model proposed by Wright, are most appropriate in the period of emergence and consolidation of the rational waves, i.e., in the years of life associated with primary, secondary and even tertiary education. Moreover, a critical stance does not lose its importance even with the emergence of transrational waves. To quote Wilber,

A highly critical, occasionally skeptical, and sometimes even polemical attitude must be our constant companion on the road to any sort of truth. The commodity most lacking in spiritual circles seems to be, indeed, a healthy skepticism, possibly because it is confused with lack of faith, a stance which, if understandable, is deeply misguided (Wilber, 1999c, p. 4).

Yet from the integral perspective, critical religious education per se is not sufficiently spiritually transformative. Even though it can indeed help to cultivate religious literacy, it is too much to expect, as Wright does, that it could 'expose children to the realm of the transcendent' (Wright, 2004, p. 212) and lead to 'the possibility of viewing our mundane and all-too-human comedy of errors *sub specie aeternitatis*—as part of potentially profound *divina commedia*' (Wright, 2004, p. 209). Following Kant, Wilber stresses that rational discussion by itself will not and cannot lead to the exposure to the realm of the transcendent, because even holistic reason (vision-logic) 'cannot grasp the essence of absolute reality, and when it tries, it generates only dualistic incompatibilities' (Wilber, 1999e, p. 169). What reason can do is only 'strip Spirit of its infantile and childish associations, parental fixations, wish fulfillments, dependency yearnings, and symbiotic gratifications' (Wilber, 1999b, p. 87). For Wilber, the ultimate truth is available as public knowledge only through direct transrational realisation to those who possess a trained spiritual eye:

The knowledge of God is as public to the contemplative eye as is geometry to the mental eye and rainfall to the physical eye. And a trained contemplative eye can *prove* the existence of God with exactly same certainty and the same public nature as the eye of flesh can prove the existence of rocks (Wilber, 1999e, p. 184).

Therefore, from the integral perspective, becoming religiously literate is only the first, though important enough, step toward spiritual transformation and acquisition of genuine religious knowledge.

Finally, within the confines of rational inquiry into religious matters, Wilber, following Habermas (1976), insists that a truly critical perspective toward different worldviews demands not only a shift from quantitative to qualitative pluralism as Wright demands (2000b, p. 177), but also a combination of qualitative pluralism in the LL quadrant with *developmental structuralism*, for the latter 'seems to give us

that universal or quasi-universal critical dimension or external corrective apparently lacking in merely hermeneutic, phenomenological, or symbolic realist approaches' (Wilber, 1999b, p. 41). In other words, even critical forms of religious education would be more effective in their attempts 'to do justice to the horizon of religion' (Wright, 2000b, p. 177) as well as 'to do justice to the horizon of the pupil' (ibid), if they are plugged into the four quadrant framework. The major benefits of employing the framework in critical and other forms of religious education would include the following:

- The framework allows to define more precisely the term 'holistic' as 'all-quadrant, all-level.'
- The framework functions as an indexing system for sciences, worldviews, philosophies, religions, spiritualities, and educational approaches, with the following parameters:
 - the developmental level of the subjects producing the worldview or theory
 - the level of reality (or object), at which the worldview or theory is directed
 - the types of orientations within levels
 - the quadrants (perspectives) mostly engaged in and the lines within quadrants particularly stressed
 - the altered states that may have had an impact on the subjects producing the worldview or theory (Wilber, 2001b, p. 108).
- The holonic analysis performed on the basis of this indexing system can help to locate each worldview and theory and appreciate their importance, to understand the way different worldviews and theories relate to each other, to unravel the multidimensional nature of ideological conflicts, and find ways of fostering communication, constructive critique and collaboration among conflicting parties.
- The framework translates into the Prime Directive as the main ethical imperative for treatment of persons as well as worldviews, religions, and spiritualities in pedagogic practice: to ensure the health of the entire spiral, not preferential treatment for any one level or stream or realm.

Conclusion

Even though in this essay the integral philosophy of Ken Wilber is confronted with only one model of religious education, clearly the conversation can and should expand much further. Moreover, the four quadrant framework can become a common metatheoretical foundation and communicative framework to a number of various educational models and approaches. Some of them will incorporate the entire framework, others only the conventional part of it. Yet in any case, these approaches will probably share more than a map. More important, the authors of these integrally informed approaches are likely to share the basic attitude to mapmaking, which underlies the entire integral philosophy of Ken Wilber:

Building on the rich diversity offered by pluralistic relativism, we need to take the next step and weave those many strands into a holonic spiral of unifying connections, an interwoven Kosmos of mutual intermeshing. We need, in short, to move from pluralistic relativism to universal integralism—we need to keep trying to find One-in-the-Many that is the form of the Kosmos itself (Wilber, 2001b, p. 112).

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DIALOGUE TO TRUTH IN BELL HOOKS AND JANE ROLAND MARTIN

Namulundah Florence

School of Education, Brooklyn College

Introduction

Exasperated by Jesus' responses during the interrogation at the Sanhedrin Pilate asked: 'What is truth?' (John 18:28–38). It is a question both theists and secular humanists still grapple with given cultural diversity and subsequent need for legitimacy of policies and practices across the globe. Academies are committed to the inquiry and transmission of 'truth'. Contrary to the Carthage born theologian Tertullian's (ca 160–225) assessment, Jerusalem and Athens are overlapping frames of reference (Groome, 1993). Groome maintains that a wisdom epistemology involves commitment to the whole truth: cognitive, relational, and moral. But since one's identity or beliefs significantly shape individual perceptions, discourse confirms or challenges one's conception, hopefully, to a more comprehensive understanding of reality.

bell hooks and Jane Roland Martin advocate discourse about prevailing forms of inquiry and knowledge for cognitive and character (moral) development. While both avoid religious language, their theories demonstrate an inextricable link between abstract theory and students' lived experiences; academic pursuit and creating a just society; individual interests and social concerns. Both scholars recognize what Martin calls the transfer value of a liberal education, what some scholars refer to as the hidden curriculum or collateral learning. However inexplicit, schools foster a set of values. hooks and Martin advocate creating a community of scholars whose goals extend beyond the academy. Arguably, these choices are based on a particular conception of self and social ideal.

Evident in hooks and Martin's education treatises is a moral ethic that affirms the individual albeit not at the expense of the larger community and an intellectual pursuit that integrates the affective. While Martin's critique focuses on curriculum, hooks' works decry discriminatory pedagogy across race, gender and class identities.

Discourse or engaged pedagogy is both political and practical. At its best, classroom discourse broadens an intellectual base to avoid a teacher focus while affirming the student's voice and prior knowledge. At their worst, classroom discussions can degenerate to exclusive interactions between a teacher and visibly motivated students. Meanwhile less committed students develop a cunning passivity that belies Martin and hooks' discursive thesis for fostering a community of learners.

The three part analysis, recommendations, and critique presented here draws upon hooks' and Martin's discursive education treatises with regard to curriculum and pedagogy. Part one focuses on Martin's curriculum critique of prevailing forms of inquiry and knowledge with recommendations for reform. The second part explores hooks' engaged pedagogy relative to a traditional teacher-centred approach. Part three critiques Martin and hooks' education proposals for a more meaningful educative experience. The conclusion recognizes the centrality of teachers in students' cognitive and character development.

Analysis

Education as the process of transmitting a cultural heritage raises issues of content, process and goals. In Freire (2000) assessment, education is never neutral. The selection of curriculum and pedagogical strategies challenges or sanctions the status quo. hooks (1994) and Groome (1993) view teaching as a vocation. Teachers enable students' choices. More than mere functionaries of cultural transmission, teachers foster a moral order, directly and indirectly delineating social values and justifications. For Martin (1985) an epistemological equality that underlies the educational conversation requires a multiplicity of perspectives and a diversity of voices. Perkinson's (1995) assessment of education as the imperfect panacea for a social, economic, and political order has made little dent in the ubiquitous faith in schooling across the world. Linking classroom interactions to Biblical education processes, Brueggemann (1982) notes how education like the canon involves the recognition and subsequent maintenance of communal values across generations. As the base script the Torah works in tandem with ongoing prophetic calls to renewal; the wisdom of aligning experience to existing forms and ways of knowing. Not unlike traditional institutions of imparting knowledge, schools guarantee a transmission process that clarifies and delineates social definitions.

An education system that develops discursive engagement over and above the amassing of information equips students for social eventualities rather than givens. This raises two issues—awareness of an existing tradition and engaging such material to broaden the knowledge base. Core curriculum advocates like William Bennett, Allan Bloom and E.D Hirsch Jr., among others, presume underlying cohesiveness and unity in established systems. In contrast, ongoing curriculum construction appears to foster a fragmented and incomplete curriculum accommodating minority views (Martin, 1994). The nostalgia for community that pervades advocates for the unity of Western culture and proponents of counter-cultural noncanonical works appears misplaced, given disparities in curriculum. The whole

debate centres on whether there exists a body of knowledge to which *everyone* should have access in the schools, notes Guillory (1993). Regardless of uniformity in conception, integrating discourse in the teaching/learning process honors human agency and historicity by building upon an existing tradition while allowing learners to appropriate what is for what could be. As a negotiated rather than inherited reality, education, like culture, presumes ongoing discourse, formal and otherwise. Often, the canon debate is portrayed in terms of a choice between order and chaos.

The author's commitment to building a community of learners draws from hooks' and Martin's education treatises. Teacher-centred lectures provide a theoretical base for individual topic areas to generate discourse. To foster student engagement in the learning process, students take responsibility for a particular reading that they share insights from with the rest of the class on an assigned date. Notwithstanding paired discussions and collaborative projects, students respond verbally or in writing to a question or thesis statement related to the assigned reading. They randomly exchange notebooks for peer review before some read out the pieces to the class. Impromptu quizzes spread across the semester help demonstrate student familiarity with class texts and discussions. In addition, class discussions integrate media issues related to theoretical material. The presence of a diverse student body reduces incidents of dismissive 'authority of experience' charges that may ensue in class discussions. But even with this and other strategies a few students rarely participate, claiming among other reasons introversion and fear of crowds. Yet classroom discourse requires a collective effort even for extremely eloquent lecturers (hooks, 1994b). The commitment to stipulated goals and process require passion and preparedness by both parties.

A good conversation is neither a fight nor a contest. Circular in form, cooperative in manner, and constructive in intent, it is an interchange of ideas by those who see themselves not as adversaries but as human beings come together to talk and listen and learn from one another (Martin, 1985, p. 10).

Yet as Martin and hooks maintain, the education conversation reflects a male bias in knowledge construction and conceptions. Pedagogical strategies for the most part further marginalise students on the basis of race, gender, and class. The replication of value hierarchies in curriculum and pedagogy perpetuating old myths in similar transmission styles, undermine the teaching/learning process of veracity and vivacity. While Martin and hooks avoid prescriptive moral injunctions, both recognise the link between rational thought and individual behavior, cognitive and character development. In their treatises, the goals of education are inseparable from the process of education.

Curriculum

Martin and hooks attribute limited discourse in school settings to exclusive curriculum and discriminatory pedagogical strategies. Martin's extensive critique of mainstream curriculum highlights consistent exclusivity in knowledge construction.

An exclusive education base and goals, a charge Martin levels at mainstream education, is partial and myopic particularly in its social definitions and inquiry. Similarly hooks notes the role of power and ideology in the sociohistorical construction of knowledge, education, culture, identity, difference, and social relations. For hooks, racism, classism, and sexism preclude particular students from classroom discourse. While focusing on sexism in knowledge construction, Martin also decries the omission of the social minority perspective as educational history and philosophy demonstrate. Both scholars highlight the importance of theory informing and guiding practice.

Saying nothing about the external issues of inclusiveness, relevance, and meaningfulness, our elders sing the praises of a curriculum that had no space for portraying blacks as human beings—in American history they were seen as slaves and then as objects of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, elsewhere they were invisible. They extol a course of study in which women were invisible in both the public and their private homes. They seek to restore an American education that had no room reserved for American Indian cultures and no place in which the poor, whether male or female, of color or of no color, were accurately depicted (Martin, 1994, p. 220).

The Eurocentric bias in mainstream textbooks legitimates the normative status of White males while providing scanty coverage of the lived realities and perspectives of women and people of color (hooks, 1994a). hooks' writings decry the equation of white middle/upper class male experiences and cultural histories to a national heritage. The United States has appropriated Christopher Columbus as a mythical symbol of a self-created identity while conspicuously omitting its violent separation from English cultural and political icons as well as the decimation of indigenous peoples and elements. The selective choice of memory legitimates domination, oppression, and exploitation rather than reciprocity, community, and mutuality.

Martin maintains that what passes for social definitions and academic disciplines—scientific theories, historical narratives and literary interpretations—belies standards of epistemological equality. Conventional wisdom reflects male rather than female ideals, focuses on public at the expense of the domestic sphere, privileges theory over practice, rationality over affectivity, reinforces metaphysical dualisms, and exhibits Eurocentrism over cultural pluralism, among others. A deeply embedded cultural consciousness explains purportedly unquestionable assumptions about education. Defining it as 'guilt by association,' Martin (1994) notes that as

both the 'products' and 'transmitters' of liberal education, [scholars] do not question this culture's underlying educational presuppositions...Trained to interrogate the works of white men, to problematise the idea of a canon, to historicise the concepts of gender and race, and to treat even the human body as a social construct, we are simultaneously indoctrinated in the belief that the present configuration of education is one of the world's brute facts (p. 27).

In this light, discourse broadens the process of epistemological inquiry and definitions to include in hooks' and Martin's proposal, formerly marginalised sources and cultural perspectives. Addressing issues of stability and change, education becomes an ongoing collaborative quest for meaning and relevance. Indeed, Groome (1993) identifies: engaging, attending, expressing, reflecting, accessing, appropriating, as primary elements of a humanising pedagogy that educates for life.

The 'best of what has been thought, said and done' promises certitude. There are 'truths' that pre-exist the individual, a gift to succeeding generations. It is a framework for understanding the world and our role in it. In education, class texts may be critiqued but they structure an educational experience, nurturing, and socialising future scholars. Like stories in oral traditions, education offers concrete truths of persons and events; imaginative metaphors that bind speakers and listeners. None living today experienced the Declaration of Independence in 1776 but we know and believe in it. In transmitting stories, the speaker expresses a public experience of reality. In this light, a hegemonic cultural history is binding and normative across generations. Community concerns precede individual aspirations in providing a framework for social arrangements and policy decisions. The teacher's role is primarily one of transmission and injunction. Similarly, the canonical process in the Hebrew Scriptures addresses issues of continuity and discontinuity as well as stability and flexibility in community. Such a tentative process 'avoids the hazards of rigid *fossilisation* which hold to a frozen, unresponsive canon, and to a deep *relativising* which gives up everything for a moment of relevance' (Brueggemann, 1982, p. 7). Yet, like the Torah that is guarded, protected, treasured, celebrated and preserved, the consensus of a standard text ennobles one version of reality to the exclusion of alternative stories rather than deny their existence.

But, argues Martin (1992), this image of a cultural heritage, or specifically, curricula,

[r]elieves us of moral and social responsibility, [yet] the truth is that every society must pick and choose just what elements of its past—what knowledge, traditions, values, worldviews—constitute the capital it wants to transmit to the next generation...As the world changes, either a culture's choice or the education it extends to its young will begin to be dysfunctional (p. 202).

A community's responsibility revolves around formal and informal probing of the normative, casting off what loses vitality and embracing enriching elements of the present. Brueggemann views the conspirator's plan to silence Jeremiah (Jer 18:18) as pivotal in delineating the process of education in the Hebrew Scriptures. Secular education too has its 'torah,' its priests, prophets and sages. Yet, as our debatable canons are transmitted, scholars, social critics, radicals and revolutionaries forever 'unmask' the status quo while sages seek a healthier balance in interpreting the inscrutable and given. Classroom discourse in hooks and Martin's education treatises delineate the process of a negotiated curriculum and inclusive pedagogies.

Disciplines, Martin maintains are human creations not immutable divine eternal. Her critique highlights male privilege, priority of the public sphere, and theory over practice in education.

Androcentrism vs. Human Ideals:

The absence of women in the texts and anthologies of most disciplines and the androcentric bias of prevailing analysis and interpretations explains the exclusivity in theories and narratives, interpretations, and analyses of contemporary philosophers of education. Martin (1994) cites Naomi Weisstein and Carol Gilligan's work in psychology and Ruth Hubbard in biology to demonstrate the marginality of females in knowledge construction. Specifically, conceptions of disciplines, including educational thought, draw mainly on mainstream philosophers and their sources—Plato, John Dewey, Alfred North Whitehead, Jean Jacques Rousseau, among others. 'In sum, the intellectual disciplines into which a person must be initiated to become an educated person *exclude* women and their works, *construct* the female to the male image of her and *deny* the truly feminine qualities she does possess' (Martin, 1985, p. 3; 1994, p. 74). This, despite historical precedents on female education in Plato's *Republic*, Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Emile*, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A vindication of the rights of women*, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*, among others. Subsequently, the liberal ideal reflects citizenship and society's productive rather than its reproductive process considered feminine (Martin, 1985, 1994). This epistemological inequality reinforces a gender hierarchy at the expense of cross-gender collaboration.

Recovering the lives and works of minorities throughout history provides empowering inclusive models, corrects historical epistemological omissions and reassesses social norms and values (Martin, 1985; 1994; hooks, 1994b; 2003). hooks (2000b) commends the feminist movement for exposing biases in curricula.

Producing a body of feminist literature coupled with the demand for the recovery of women's history was one of the most powerful and successful interventions of contemporary feminism. In all spheres of literary writing and academic scholarship works by women had historically received little or no attention as a consequence of gender discrimination (p. 20).

As a corrective Martin calls for a revision of bona fide topics of study and sources of data in epistemological inquiry and conceptions. Any chance of creating a harmonious world in a two-sex society entails an integration of tasks and functions traditionally assigned to either sex.

To broaden our sources of epistemological inquiry requires integration of sources outside 'standard' texts and established channels of communication such as personal letters, diaries, pamphlets, newsletters, pieces of fiction, and oral sources as well (Martin, 1985). hooks (1994b) identifies personal testimony and experience as fertile ground for the production of liberatory feminist theory that chart new theoretical journeys. She commends men and women who 'dare to create theory from the

location of pain and struggle' (p. 74). hooks, however, remains critical of creating authority of experience, an atheoretical discourse that ignores theory. Minorities should engage existing texts by continuous self-reflection and responsibility that leads to social change. Finding is one thing, telling is another, claims Martin. Knowledge should be shared to raise consciousness.

Even as we work directly to change the negative messages about women and the reproductive processes of society transmitted by religious and secular, popular and high culture, we should raise to conscious level in all students the hidden value hierarchy of society itself. Another step is to build nurturing capacities and an ethics of care into the curriculum itself (Martin, 1985, p. 197).

hooks highlights the importance of early intervention to foster critical consciousness.

Children's literature is one of the most crucial sites for feminist education for critical consciousness precisely because beliefs and identities are still being formed. And more often than not narrowminded thinking about gender continues to be the norm on the playground. Public education for children has to be a place where feminist activists continue to do the work of creating unbiased curriculum (hooks, 2000b, p. 23).

Public vs. Domestic Sphere

Defining history as the record of public and political achievements reinforces productive processes—man's sphere—of society. The focus on society's productive processes—political, cultural as well as economic activities—inducts students into a public world rather than the domestic sphere. Further, the absence of women in historical narratives devalues the reproductive processes—marriage, child rearing and family life activities—associated with females (Martin, 1994). Martin attributes the alarming statistics on child abuse and domestic violence in society to the failure to integrate the reproductive process in society within mainstream curriculum. Epistemological dualisms central to Platonic philosophy promote and support compartmentalisation. Martin's (1995) schoolhome gives equal emphasis to the three R's as the 'three C's of care, concern, and connection—not by designating formal courses in these fundamentals but by being a domestic environment characterised by safety, security, nurturance, and love' (p. 357). Creating inclusive schools involves educating *all* our children in our *whole* heritage.

Martin calls for a radical change in education so that boys and girls learn productive skills for home life and careers in the workforce to avoid portraying masculine activities and experiences as normative. Taking issue with the absence of care, concern and connection in liberal education, Martin avers that the focus on rationality draws scholars away from the real world, with its problems reduced to abstract discourses, a focus that may leave the educated woman second class at best, invisible and irrelevant at worst. Traits of rationality and autonomy,

lauded by Plato's *Republic*, create obstacles for females socialised to passivity and subservience (Martin, 1985). Although advocating women's access to politics, the *Republic* renders the status of women and family a-educational and a-political. Subsequently, some students come to believe that males are superior to females, and the educated female lauded for her masculine-like qualities of objectivity, analysis, and rationality but suffering from lack of self-confidence and self-alienation (Martin, 1994). The subsequent emotional and academic dissonance among female students arises from their acquiring traits valued by society but genderised in favor of males. Females whose participation is atypical and contributions discredited gradually doubt their intellectual capacity, minimise their career goals, and lose confidence: 'It is hard, very hard, to be a living contradiction every minute and hour of every working day and night: the psychic costs are enormous, the threat of ridicule is ever present' (Martin, 1994, p. 111). But then narrow conceptions of social ideals and education disciplines are just as self-defeating for females as male students. Males are illiterate of sympathetic identification, separate love from work, undervalue nurturing capacity; traits society considers feminine. An accommodation involves acquiring traits they and their society considers inferior. Redefining the function of education and restructuring the ideal of an educated person avoids dualisms and value hierarchies. It impacts pedagogy, teacher-pupil relationships, school structures and more than likely our conception of humanity.

Theory vs. Practice

As an analytical philosopher Martin (1996) acknowledges her extensive focus on words and sentences to the exclusion of free will, other minds, good and evil or overall education. The use of academic jargon, inaccessible language, what Martin calls *academese* creates outsiders and insiders to the 'conversation.'

In assigning theory a kind of sovereignty over practice—or, if you prefer, over all practices excepting theorising—the academy's conception or model of the theory/practice relationships coheres nicely with a self-definition as an institution having as few dealings as possible with the everyday world. Indeed, it allows academy members to pursue theoretical knowledge while letting the chips fall where they may (Martin, 1996, p. 604).

hooks (1994b) specifically decries academic preference for theoretical work that is highly abstract, jargonistic, difficult to read, and containing obscure references. Insulated from the material experiences of students—unemployment, overdue rent, childcare and substance additions, classroom discourse boils down to mental gymnastics and regurgitating of facts. Further, education fosters inner harmony at the expense of outward connections. Discounting protests of limited if not absent footnotes and bibliographic references, hooks claims the poly-vocality in her writing attests to the value of employing non-jargonistic language to more adequately address an audience beyond the academy.

hooks (1994) and Martin (1993) note the danger of dualism in schooling. hooks' engaged pedagogy contests the body/spirit dualism that reduces students to disembodied spirits in the discourse. The choice reduces classroom interactions to mental exercises at the expense of people's physical needs and concerns. hooks acknowledges the seriousness of learning but insists that learning ought not be devoid of pleasure and joy. The teacher's passion for ideas and students revitalises the educational experience (Florence, 1998). Martin (1996) recalls teaching a fifth grade boring, mindless, disconnected curriculum that bore little significance to students' lived reality. A dualistic orientation denies the physicality of students, divorces mind from body, school from home, teacher from students, feeling from action, distinctions that also concerned John Dewey. There is little need to link curriculum to the here and now or to the future lives of students. While education may not involve social activism, such dualisms foster schizophrenic orientations among participants. Re-envisioning curriculum would require 'uniting thought and action, reason and emotion, self and other' (Martin, 1994, p. 211).

The claims of equality or objectivity in scholarship are self-contradictory in a society that reflects exclusive policies and practices. A more democratic approach calls for learner and teacher engagement that rests on three pillars—received text, prophetic critic and experiential basis of knowledge and process of knowing. Brueggemann (1982) and Groome (1980; 1993) capture this vision of schooling. Learning goes beyond teacher impositions of reality to an ongoing discourse for a more inclusive reality and vision. Brueggemann expresses the process in terms of 'sorting out what is *given* and what is an *option*' (p. 78). In his view the human person is a generator of new knowledge rather than its passive recipient. The fluidity of such propositions explains the allegiance to certitude and stability both in knowledge inquiry and transmission process. The primary lure of a canon, whether religious or secular, is the evident continuity and goals for education. Groome's (1980, 1993) tripartite conception of religious education or humanising pedagogy leads both teacher and student into an integrative process of: (a) The Story, (b) personal stories, and (c) an envisioned story. Individual stories or experienced reality builds on, affirms or critiques an established story or tradition for purposes of creating a more meaningful story and transmitted intellectual heritage.

A hermeneutics of suspicion addresses deeply ingrained assumptions regarding academic and social knowledge—practices, procedures, rules, relationships, and structures—as well as the vision of a good society (hooks, 1994b, Martin, 1994). A teacher's input works in tandem with students' lived realities to create more meaningful curricula. This requires recognising and building upon historical achievements, inclusive perceptions and achievements, no doubt. The legitimacy of existing theories is evaluated against emerging realities. Martin (1985) calls for acquaintanceship and conversation rather than discipleship and dogma. The review of existing structures and practices entail ongoing discourse despite the inherent risk of cultural or educational discontinuity.

The prevailing authority of knowledge is essentially provisional. What passes as certified knowledge is not far removed from the passionate agenda of the

community. Notes Brueggemann (1982): 'the texts we regard as authoritative and canonical are in fact marginal in their origins and claims' (p. 50). Teachers 'expose the pretensions of the royal system' (p. 52), seeking 'truth' among alternative truths by fostering hermeneutical analysis. In John Dewey's *My pedagogic creed* (1897) the teacher as prophet ushers in God's true kingdom (Reed & Johnson, 2000). Recognising the disciplinary bias in curriculum foundation and its purported impartiality, at the least, presents 'intellectual disciplines as creative human endeavors rather than God-given bodies of knowledge. And, above all, [students] would be treated as active learners: as young discoverers rather than passive receptacles of information' (Martin, 1994, p. 20). In the Hebrew Scriptures the new truth came from the disinherited, prophetic literature questioning the 'embodiment of official power and public knowledge,' the link between 'the substance of truth' and the 'structure of authority.' (Brueggemann, 1982, p. 42). In our time, notes Brueggemann, the call comes from the economically disinherited, the politically powerless and the ecclesiologically excluded. Each era shifts the locus of knowledge and forms of knowing be it religion, science or the rational being. Broadening the conversation in classrooms jars the certitude implicit in established canons and forms of knowing. In the larger society the counterculture challenges established forms of being, knowing and feeling.

Pedagogy

Insofar as schools reflect and sanction social norms and values, exclusive imagery and practice reinforce existing social hierarchies and obstacles to marginalised individuals and groups. The historical bias influences contemporary education theories and practices as well as future guidelines and aspirations in a domino effect across generations and within established social structures. Because precedents legitimate current choices, unexamined flaws spiral out too often, to unintended consequences and degrees. Whether conscious or otherwise, conventional beliefs and prejudices acquire legitimacy in the absence of alternative definitions and visions. In contrast, hooks' call for creating a community of scholars recognises the collective nature of the educative experience. Through discourse, students and teachers affirm, challenge or reconstruct prevailing notions of 'truth.' Movies such as *To sir with love*; *Stand and deliver*; *Dead poets society* and *Mr. Holland's opus* demonstrate the impact of a humanising pedagogy on students' lives (Groome, 1993). The following discussion addresses the impact of discriminatory pedagogy on learning among members of minority groups. It focuses on the impact of gender, race and class biases in classroom discourse.

Gender

Both Martin and hooks acknowledge the impact of alienation on the academic success of minorities. However, while Martin's work focuses on the impact of sexism on the conceptualisation and dissemination of knowledge, hooks' body

of works draws upon her experience as student and professor to illustrate the marginality of women in classrooms.

Look at many of the women's faces, postures, expressions. Listen to the women's voices. Listen to the silences, the unasked questions, the blanks. Listen to the small, soft voices, often courageously trying to speak up, voices of women taught early that tones of confidence, challenge, anger, or assertiveness, are strident and unfeminine. Listen to the voices of the women and the voices of the men; observe the space men allow themselves, physically and verbally, the male assumptions that people will listen, even when the majority of the group is female (Rich in Martin, 1985, pps. 21–22).

I knew from first hand experience the difference in female self-esteem and self-assertion in same-sex classrooms versus those where males were present. At Stanford males ruled the day in every classroom. Females spoke less, took less initiative, and often when they spoke you could hardly hear what they were saying. Their voices lacked strength and confidence. And we were told time and time again by male professors that we were not as intelligent as the males, that we could not be 'great' thinkers, writers, and so on (hooks, 2000b, p. 13).

Posited as the 'Other' in society and school norms, female students battle with tensions between self-worth and cultural constructs of gender. The stereotypes of females as irrational, untrustworthy, and generally inferior, relative to males impacts their self-confidence and aspirations. Further, the ignorance of women's achievements, their rebellious and organised movements against male oppression account for an ongoing sense of powerlessness in females (Martin, 1985).

There are by now enough studies of schoolrooms, playgrounds, college classrooms and extracurricular activities in the United States to lead me, at least, to the discomfiting conclusion that a hidden curriculum in misogyny flourishes in our educational landscape...But the fact is that, whatever other categories they also fall into, those people our culture calls girls and women undergo some terrible experiences in the course of being educated in the United States (Martin, 1994, p. 18).

Arguably, some female students resist participating in classroom discourse due to a socialised passivity and alienation in school settings. They lean to more inclusive, albeit less conflictual assertions in classroom discourse.

But that is one side of the story. In contrast, Sommers' (2000) *The war against boys: How misguided feminism is harming our young men* flips the gender debate by demonstrating that boys rather than girls in the U.S.A are the social and academic victims. She calls the campaign against female bias in education ideological rather than objective. In her view, the de-emphasis of structured classrooms, competition and strict discipline and skill-and-fact-based learning penalises male students. There is evidence to support either claim. On the one hand, besides the increasing numbers of female enrollments and graduates at the college level, female students receive

higher grades and obtain better class ranks in most fields. On the other hand, males continue to dominate the mathematics, science and sports fields.

Race

A society that has normalised exploitative behavior towards Blacks reinforces the self-fulfilling prophesy of black (academic) underachievement. hooks (2003) cites Beverly Tatum's essay 'Racial identity development and relational theory: The case of black women in white communities,' to demonstrate how black students in predominantly white schools may have a diverse group of friends but experience 'greater self-doubt about their worth and value' (hooks, 2003, p. 164). Lamenting the ills of desegregated schools hooks recalls her inability to relax enough to excel or even learn in threatening predominantly white classrooms. As a student, hooks anticipated warmth and care from those similar to her, who provided the stamina to withstand racist assaults. Alienated in such schools and set apart from African American peers the students developed self-doubt that hooks claims pervades black children across class in the United States. Overwhelmed by pressures personal and otherwise, many black students drop out of school. Teachers fail or shame radically conscious students that challenge White supremacist thinking in classrooms. Students allege teacher insensitivity or gross dismissal of their contributions. 'Learning in an environment of anxiety and stress has caused many black folks to lose their faith in the transformative power of education. But the problem was never education but rather being taught by narrow-minded educators' (hooks, 2003, p. 92). She indicts public school systems for becoming 'a pseudo prison where black children are detained and held rather than educated' as disenfranchising students (p. 169). Regardless of the dehumanisation, she enjoins these students to participate in the discourse. hooks urges blacks to be more assertive in expressing even unwelcome opinions, ignore put-downs and seek affirming company.

hooks (1994b, 2003) charges white and black teachers of discriminatory attitudes in imitation of racist America. In conscious and unconscious ways, white teachers expect black students to perform less well than their white counterparts. Similarly Black professors

act as though they believe all black students are lazy and irresponsible...address questions and comments in classroom settings solely to white students...[making] an effort not to acknowledge in any way black students so as not to be open to the critique that they have preferences, a stance which may lead them to overcompensate by being overly attentive to non-black students (hooks, 1989, p. 68).

Conventional views attribute black academic achievement to the impact of a legacy of discrimination, cultural incompatibility with white middle-class values or the prevalence of circles of poverty, violence and despair.

[A] vast majority of black children are neglected...more than 50 percent are abandoned by their fathers...a large body...among the poor and homeless...the continued miseducation...that lets them graduate from high school without basic reading and writing skills, inevitably black children across class, learn early to be subservient and resigned to their destiny (hooks, 2003, p. 187).

Spontaneity and creativity rather than rigid discipline in children threaten existing social hierarchies. Martin (1994) attributes black separatism and (academic) underachievement to cultural invisibility and personal fear.

No doubt some of those young people who do not find their own lives, histories, experiences, worldviews in their school curriculum will manage to make the White man's point of view their own. Unable to establish rapport with a curriculum that does not reach out to them, all too many who fail to see themselves in the norm drop out of school figuratively, if not literally, and retreat into their groups and themselves (p. 224).

That is one rationale for academic disassociation among black students. Conscious or otherwise, choices by individual students and cultural groups enhance or undermine classroom discourse. Through truancy, counter school culture, and disruption of intended schooling outcomes, students disqualify themselves from social and economic mobility. hooks (2003) acknowledges that troubled black children react to overt racism of teaching plans and materials by declaring their own war on education:

They not only begin to actively resist learning, they begin to terrorise those black students who want to learn...Black students are acting in a self-destructive manner when they repudiate all education, but low self-esteem makes it easier to reject the faulty education that is offered rather than do the work, which black folks did in the past, of taking the learning that was needed for our advancement and leaving the rest (p. 90).

Similarly, John McWhorter (2000) attributes poor academic performance among black students to attitudes of victimology, anti-intellectualism, and separatism. Black students avoid responsibility, view schooling as a 'white thing,' and disengage from purportedly mainstream 'white' culture. He roots the problem in individual pathology rather than structural discrimination.

Class

Of the world's 6 billion people, 2.8 billion live on less than \$2 a day and 1.2 billion on less than \$1 a day. Poor people lack adequate shelter, education and health (World Development Report 2000/2001). Specifically, although 35 million people live in poverty in the United States, among them employed adults, schools promote middle- and upper-class values, tastes, languages, and dialects, while classroom interactions

invoke bourgeois experiences and ideals (hooks, 1994b). Economically privileged children have the cultural capital that aids their school success such as literary exposure and familiarity with the power of language. hooks recalls experiencing disenfranchisement given her working class roots in the elitist Stanford University in California. Students from low-income backgrounds felt obliged to assimilate—to talk ‘proper’ and engage in affluent leisure activities that require finances beyond their reach: ‘If one was not from a privileged class group, adopting a demeanor similar to that of the group could help one advance. It is still necessary for students to assimilate bourgeois values in order to be deemed acceptable’ (p. 178). The materialistic thinking leads to individualism, competitiveness, and an obsession with material gain and consumer goods rather than a sense of ethics and self-appreciation. Coletta Reid (1974) recounts a similar experience at a little fundamentalist church college in Oklahoma, an experience many students from poorer backgrounds well recognise.

On scholarship...College initiated me into an alien culture that I knew I had to master to go anywhere. From the first week on I stood demurely chatting and sipping hot tea, took showers and acted like I felt right at home in long-winded academic discussions. I found out that there were hundred books everybody else could discuss that I hadn’t even heard of...But I found that college doesn’t just prepare you for an easier, better-paying job; it insures that you dress, talk, and think like a member of the professional class—that includes thinking you’re better than working-class people and their culture (p. 66).

In this light, students from working-class backgrounds are compelled to surrender memory, to forget the past and claim the assimilated present as the only worthwhile and meaningful reality. Much like interlopers, such students perceive a limited stake in the classroom discourse.

Recommendations

hooks’ engaged pedagogy addresses the exclusivity of race, gender and class classroom discourse by creating a critically conscious community of learners. The process interrogates existing knowledge bases and hierarchical social arrangements. As counter-cultural, it involves border crossing and more so, ongoing reflection of conventional beliefs and practices on a personal and communal level. Similarly, Martin’s call to broadening the educational conversation depends on inclusive perspectives and voices for energy and vivacity. hooks and Martin’s campaign for discursive venues empower students while reflecting life’s ambiguities by integrating typically binary perspectives in knowledge construction and inquiry. In contrast, devoid of discourse, celebrated truths acquire unqualified immutable stature and reverence.

Fostering critical consciousness on an individual and group level deconstructs entrenched epistemologies and creates participatory spaces for the sharing of knowledge, the re-conceptualisation of different ways of knowing, and the mobilisation of agency to effect changes in the world. hooks' 'teaching to transgress,' Martin's 'reclaiming a conversation,' and Groome's 'humanising pedagogy' create such a forum. Discourses on racism, sexism, and classism and homophobia employ theory to critique tradition but also envision more meaningful structures and social relations. Regardless of discipline, teachers can foster critical consciousness by highlighting relationships across bodies of knowledge, generating alternatives and drawing conclusions in discursive forums. hooks' transgressive engaged pedagogy deconstructs established hierarchical relations and definitions of social reality. In order to engage the complexity of diverse human realities in the classroom, hooks includes both teachers' and students' voices and experiences. Because it is experiential such wisdom is not dogmatic. It remains open to revision; is worthwhile but not definitive. She highlights the collective effort in a dialogue. On the one hand the learner and teacher sift through the tradition of experience and the immediacy of experience. However, both also wrestle with the reality as given and observed, aware of its inscrutability and open-endedness. Teachers create forums for analysing experience both past and immediate as well as creating frameworks for understanding reality in its inscrutability. They build on tradition but are not limited by it, neither pliable heirs nor cynics that reject everything.

hooks' vision of community confronts rather than ignores the complexity of difference. A more interactive and dynamic teaching model replaces a hierarchical model of teaching as knowledge transference. It comes from affirming difference as shaped by our identity and cultural legacy. For teachers it is a call to engagement, passion, creativity and a sense of activism, what Groome (1993) terms 'educating for life.' As a community of learners, both learner and teacher listen to, learn from and reflect with each other. The act of sharing experiences facilitates the dialogue and sharing of information that invites participants into a discourse. In contrast, authoritarian teaching practices reinforce power hierarchies in the classroom as well as discourage questioning and resistance to alternate interpretations of purported social knowledge. For such conceptions of the educational experience, the dream class is orderly with passive students who respond when called upon. Teachers equate order and silence (which may well be) to calm and organised learning. However, the model of an all-knowing teacher and learners as objects of knowledge and history bootstraps both into limiting and predetermined roles and visions of society.

Students' voices and experiences are central in hooks' engaged pedagogy. Her call to student engagement goes beyond ordinary talk, therapy sessions, or endless personal confessions. The articulation of one's experience moves one from subject to object, a claim to space and transforming power. Both students and teachers interrogate their complicity in accepting and perpetuating biases of any kind. The process recovers and affirms students' histories for purposes of analysing the social and historical constructions while recognising the need for change.

Rejecting the temptations of competition, jealousy, pugnaciousness and possessiveness, emblematic of rationality and personal autonomy models in the public sphere, Martin (1994) notes how some women distance themselves from 'unreal loyalty to professionalisation' in integrating students' lived realities to link impersonal knowledge to action and abstract theory to concrete practice' (p. 114).

hooks reminds students of their responsibility and crucial participation at the beginning of each semester. That students become active and responsible learners guarantees their visibility, acknowledgement and affirmation in such inclusive classrooms. It is an arduous task for teachers as well as students. hooks (1994b) challenges teachers to create a cultural climate where biases can be challenged and changed, where all border crossings are viewed as valid and legitimate. This does not mean that they are not subjected to critique or critical interrogation, or perpetuate existing hierarchical structures. But as she maintains, the 'risk is ultimately less threatening than a continued attachment to and support of existing systems of domination, particularly as they affect teaching, how we teach, and what we teach' (p. 131). The openness in inquiry and conceptualisation of reality creates spaces of spontaneity, invention, change, and a democratic exchange of ideas. Politically aware and reflective teachers willingly share what they know without the commanding authority of experience and knowledge.

Critique of hooks and Martin

At its worst, Martin and hooks' critique of exclusive curricula and pedagogy presumes an unrealistic uniformity in the educational experience and a somewhat gullible student body. Social and economic realities will always limit the integration of minorities in knowledge construction and inquiry. On the other hand, regardless of cultural identity well-prepared or outspoken students tend to dominate class discussions. To Berube (1992) and Guillory (1993) curriculum and pedagogy decisions reflect practical rather than an insidious orientation. Before the eighteenth century the marginal presence of women authors, primarily aristocratic, is due to their limited access to literacy rather than 'invidious or prejudicial standards of evaluation.' A similar claim can be made of the dearth of black scholarship prior to the Civil Rights movement. Despite the ideological impact

It is without question true that some past writers have suffered an undeserved oblivion; indeed the history of canon formation offers many examples of writers rediscovered after periods of obscurity. What seems dubious in historical context is that such cases can be *generally* explained by invoking the categories of race, class, or gender as the immediate criteria of inclusion or exclusion. These categories might well explain at the present time why some writers have been recovered from the archive, but not necessarily why they ceased to be read. Nor does the circumstance of their being read now mean that they have become canonical—only that they are read now (Guillory, 1993, pp. 16–17).

More recently, while organisations such as NCATE (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education) align college curricula, classrooms have never offered unifying experiences. Class texts and priorities vary across and within departments as well as institutions, either of which exhibits more or less structure than the other. Overall, the fact that women writers do not necessarily express similar values or value similar works reflects the representation of female, black, ethnic, or working class authors in positions of power but does not redress social exclusion. (Guillory, 1993) Ehrenreich (2001) for all her credibility remains an outsider to the life of hard-knocks that underclass and immigrant maids and fast-food workers inhabit. In addition, as marginalised voices gain visibility or rather notoriety, their views become dogmatic, conservative and simplistic and institutional, therefore less critical/analytical, notes Berube (1992).

hooks and Martin portray universities as academic ivory towers that transmit a particular cultural heritage. Although not mandating particular choices, universities endorse selective viewpoints through curriculum and pedagogical choices. But schools transmit a school rather than a national culture, insists Guillory (1993). Notwithstanding university mission statements and stipulated conceptual frameworks for specific programs, the teaching/learning process has never been uniform. That the syllabi rather than an established canon endorse particular views undermines the claim of an ideological curriculum impact on students. Further, syllabi differ between professors and universities, none of which represents the canon in its totality, or even consistency across periods. With all honesty, few students can claim to have read all canonical works or even materials on any one syllabus. Inevitably, syllabi reflect individual choices but also constraints of time and space. Its construction begins with selection rather than a process of elimination, contends Guillory.

Students rarely embody the John Lockean 'tabula rasa' metaphor of readily absorbing transmitted culture. Similar to media audiences, students appropriate texts heterogeneously. In this sense, the critique of purported biases in curricula and pedagogy presumes a premature Skinnerian behaviorism and outcome. Further, hooks' call for student empowerment presumes a particular type of learner, enthused for understanding and growth. Yet, there are students that expect all-knowing professors to deliver the facts into their heads rather participate in a knowledge construction discourse. Some students resent the compulsory participation and resist publicising their opinions and assumptions. Also, students who are privileged by race, gender or sex may resent the affective interrogation of their location and worldview. On the other hand, teachers may engage students of a particular class more effectively despite a similarity in subject matter. Indeed, hooks (1994b) acknowledges the significance of students' choice in classroom dynamics. In some instances, class size more than one's pedagogical orientation determine the degree of interaction. Classroom discourse can spark ideas and learning. However, regardless of racial, gender, or class identity, students who are prepared for class or are outgoing tend to dominate class discussions.

Classroom interactions involve daily negotiation of terrain; including the determination of rules and power relations. Discourse presumes and capitalises on the diversity and creativity of classroom reciprocal power. Even as teachers depend on students for attention and clear response, students look to teachers and classmates for cues about assignments and value as well as penalties of individual attitudes and behavior. Through reciprocal power teachers and students determine the degree and effectiveness of any one educational experience. Albeit unconscious for the greater part, students can disqualify themselves from inclusive classroom discourse over and above school policy or teacher intent.

Conclusion

In sum, Martin views established curriculum as exclusive and discriminatory, reflecting epistemological inequality. hooks extends the critique to pedagogical strategies. Besides the impact of an alienating curriculum, classroom practices further marginalise members of social minority groups. hooks and Martin attribute less than desirable academic performance of particular students to the 'Outsider' stigma. However, the link between school culture and national culture is more tenuous than hooks and Martin stipulate. Despite the rhetoric of multiculturalism and inclusive curriculum similarities across schools (were this true!) neither guarantee uniform education experiences nor redress structural differences among social groups (Guillory, 1993). As differences in standardised scores across the United States demonstrate, inequalities in access to economic and political resources both reflect and reinforce social hierarchies.

hooks' engaged pedagogy and Martin's reclaiming a conversation presume abilities for recognition, understanding and dialogue in social systems. These skills of speech and reception among disparate parties mirror religious belief in what is and what could be, an overarching hope in tomorrow. These scholars' critique of mainstream structures revitalises the very process of education while reconceptualising social ideals and practices. In classrooms, the critique highlights the significance of teachers in the construction and transmission of individual and social identities. Without sacrificing the teachers' role, the scholars underscore the stakes in the teaching/learning process for students and society at large. Social knowledge is far from an immutable eternal truth. Every generation has the moral and social responsibility to select its cultural heritage—knowledge, traditions, values and world-views. By fostering the art of ongoing critique, classroom discourse addresses issues of continuity and discontinuity as well as stability and flexibility in communities. Although idealistic, the vision embraces a more inclusive educative experience in the conception of self and social ideal. It dismisses the concept of an independent self and materialistic worldview. Cultural differences become a prerequisite for a dialogue that respects each group's identity. On a personal level, this involves the assessment of established policies and practices and personal complicity in maintaining discriminatory structures. Acknowledging individual worth as a god-given right challenges teachers and students to righteous living and pursuit of a more

inclusive society. The process requires more than a well-intentioned or eloquent lecturer. Students also have responsibility for creating a community of learners. Progress, notes Martin, can come from the classroom, the pen and the protest line.

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ECOFEMINISM—A HEALING PERSPECTIVE FOR RESHAPING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Dzintra Ilisko

Daugavpils University, Latvia

Introduction

The ecofeminist perspective can become a viable source for teaching religion in countries where ecological and gender concerns have been considerably neglected in designing religious educational curricula. The ecofeminist perspective is particularly relevant for the Eastern and former communist countries where the challenges posed by the ecological crisis have been notoriously overlooked. The collapse of communist governments in Eastern Europe opened new pathways for ideological debate and understanding of the global situation. The extent of ecological devastation under the state of socialism as formerly practiced in the Eastern Europe casts doubt on the communist approaches to environmental issues.

Similarly, gender concerns are major issues that need address in Eastern European countries. For example, in Latvia, as in other former communist countries, Soviet history has colored the way in which gender equality is perceived. Keller (1997) describes how the Soviet period deformed the notion of gender equality in Latvia and in other Eastern European countries. What the Soviet system referred to ‘equality’ was actually the leveling of all differences regarding gender roles; forcing men and women to do the same work outside the home.

The integration of the environmental and gender dimensions in the religious educational curriculum of schools is one of the major concerns in designing a more sustainable educational curriculum that extends towards a sustainable model of society and a global community. Sustainability encompasses not only environmental concerns, but also refers to political and societal structures, systems and practices so as to render them sustainable on their own. Thus, ecological and gender issues should be perceived as political, economic and educational concerns, and principles and insights derived from the ecofeminist theology can become a base for a sustainable ecological model for reshaping fragmented religious education. Ecofeminism can

become a healing perspective for raising gender and environmental concerns in Latvia, as well in other former post-soviet countries. Its importance is proposed because of the following reasons:

First, politically this movement offers alternatives for human societies that honor the self-determination of women and men and promotes the well-being of the entire planet. It seeks to transform the social, political and religious orders that oppress human beings as well as the earth.

Second, ecofeminism has emerged as a constructive movement imagining new forms of relating towards self, others, God, and the Earth.

Third, spiritually, ecofeminism offers practices and orientations that foster experiences of non-duality and reverence for women and the Universe.

An Ecofeminist Framework for Reshaping Religious Education

There are several main challenges derived from ecofeminist theologians that can become a basis for building a sustainable model of religious education. These challenges comprise: (1) developing an Ecological self; (2) designing non-dualistic God-world relationships; (3) building partnership in God-human relationships; (4) redefining the vocation and the place of a human in the Universe; and (5) building inclusive communities of diverse individuals.

Developing One's Ecological Self

A starting point for religious educators is developing the ability of each individual student to develop one's own self, religious identity and distinctiveness. Several authors address this point. Religious educator Moran (1989) uses the metaphor of language while referring to a better understanding of one's own religious tradition and identity. He sees understanding one's own language as a starting point. Healthy identity formation as Biehl (1991) asserts, involves 'the realisation of potentiality', which means individuals actively maintaining their identity until they fulfill their potentialities (p. 65). Several studies (Jarymowicz, 1987) point out that one's inability to differentiate oneself from others and a low self-structure development inhibits the process of taking the perspective of different others, and adopting a positive attitude towards the different other. According to a Piagetian notion, self-other differentiation is a necessary condition for adopting a non-egocentric perspective. In this framework, exocentric involvement towards the other may occur only if the self-schema is distinct from schema representing others. Self-realisation does not mean the triumph of the isolated ego, but rather the fulfillment of individual possibilities in the context of mutually supportive and ecologically sound communities. The formation of the whole person is not simply a matter of conceptual awareness and cognitive attainment. It is rather personal growth on a level of inner experience, which moves one toward deeper and more expanded relationships and identification with others. As Merton (1978) explains it, on this level of experience one gradually apprehends one's essential human quality in its wholeness

and inclusiveness. In his essay, *Learning to Live*, Merton describes the basic purpose of education as showing the person how to define oneself authentically and spontaneously in relation to one's world, in order to be open to fruitful relationships with others. Education should safeguard the person's capacity for free, creative and genuine relationships with others. In his book, *No man is an island* Merton (1955) points to a paradoxical perception of self-discovery, 'We cannot find ourselves within ourselves, but only in others, yet at the same time before we can go out to others, we must first find ourselves' (p. XVI).

The second step in perspective taking towards expanding ones self is deconstructing the false notions of 'self' and 'the other' (Finson, 1987; Winter, 1985). Moran (1989) suggests that this step involves attentiveness towards one's own language: restating questions, distinguishing terms, uncovering deeper levels of meaning, discovering that the existing definitions are too narrow, as well as noticing different meanings of a word since language is alive and is changing all the time. This involves the process of becoming aware of social constructions of one's own identity, exposing the falsity of language, as well as questioning the dominant metaphors. These dominant metaphors 'furnish the coherence of one's world and impose a fundamental shift on one's existence' (p. 28). Warren (1995) argues that when teacher and student are able to see the metaphor, 'a fundamental shift takes place in one's consciousness' (p. 208). In the process of this fundamental shift 'a radically new consciousness' emerges (Durka, 1982, p. 15). For this new consciousness to emerge, as Durka (1982) argues, it requires rejection of narrow notions of the self and the other.

The Medieval historian White (1969) suggests beginning with abandonment of one's anthropocentric view. In White's view Christianity is the most anthropocentric (human-centred) religion that bears a huge burden of guilt for the hostile attitude towards the other. This also promoted the assumption of human self-importance in the larger scheme of things that become the single deepest and most persistent assumption of all the dominant Western philosophical, social, and political traditions since the time of classic Greeks. The assumption that humans are the crowns of creation, the source of all value, the measure of all things, is deeply imbedded in our culture and consciousness. Anthropocentrism or homocentrism is an exaggerated sense of the pre-emptive importance of the human in relation to all other species. As an orientation to the world, it is an illustration of the existence of a dominant culture, religion, and nation. As Berry (1991) maintains, educational survival involves a journey into intimacy with the universe. On contrast, much of the educational journey of today leads to estrangement from the other. Fox (1995) suggests expanding one's self beyond 'the limits of one's egoistic, bibliographical or personal sense of self' to 'something which is more inclusive than individual self' (p. 199). According to Dewey, the human self is not a fixed, ready-made identity. Dewey's notion of an expanded self includes such attitudes as straightforwardness, open-mindedness, breath of outlook, integrity of purpose, and responsibility towards the different other. Such qualities characterise a person who is extending and deepening an interest in learning from all of his or her contacts

in the world. Dewey calls this posture ‘the essential moral interest’ because it extends towards ongoing, responsive engagement with other human beings and their purposes and hopes (Dewey, as cited in Hansen, 2002, p. 269). Dewey’s conception of self reaches beyond such terms as *self-interesse*, that means ‘to be around and in the midst of things, or to be at the centre of a thing and to stay with it’ (Dewey, as cited in Hansen, 2002, p. 269).

Conceptualising the self as an ecosystem existing within a larger ecosystem can also facilitate the shift from thinking of self as a separate, independent entity to recognising its complete interdependence in the totality. Similarly, ecofeminist thinkers define relatedness as the most essential condition of a human being. In the cosmology advanced by ecofeminist writers, there is no such thing as an isolated human being. The self is seen as a part of an interdependent, interconnected and interacting complex of events and things. Ecofeminist thinkers deny abstract individualism and define relations as a most essential condition of a human person. To be human is to be essentially directed towards others (McFague, 1995; Gebara, 1999). In the ecological subject-subject model, also called by McFague (1993) the agent-agent model, the world is seen as composed of living, changing, growing, mutually related, interdependent entities, of which human beings are one, and where none of these entities is a mere object, but all in different ways are subjects. The ecological vision of a human person does not fuse all subjects into one. Each subject has its own individuality and its own distinctiveness, its own goals and ends. To be essentially related to other persons, and at the same time, to be essentially self-directed, unique individuals whose actions and concerns are valuable in themselves, are not two conflicting aspects of every experience. The ecological vision underscores the most radical unity (everything at some level is interrelated and interdependent with everything else) and the most radical individuality (everything is different from every other thing).

Practical applications in reshaping religious education involve adopting ecological attitude towards oneself and others which includes; (1) *beneficence*—serving others, or doing good for others; (2) *esteem of others*—respect for the integrity of all things, the avoidance of any abuse and manipulation or destruction; (3) *receptivity*—adopting an attitude of awe towards nature; (4) *humility*—avoiding feelings of arrogance and feelings of superiority over nature; (5) *understanding*—seeing ways of sustaining the environment; and (6) *communion*—being in solidarity with the Earth (Nash, as cited in Hill, 1998, p. 272).

Designing a Non-Dualistic God-World Relationships

In formulating this challenge, ecofeminist theologians Gray (1981), McFague (1993), and Gebara (1995) allude to the role of Christian theology that fostered a series of interlocking and destructive dualisms. Because Christianity has strongly affected the shape of Western culture, these dualisms are pervasive in the thought structures of the culture. The basic theological dualism is the split between God and the Universe. The doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* is centred on an understanding of

God as pure spirit. The world thus is created and set apart from God. Consequently, a dualism of mind and body in the human person is reinforced (Gray, 1981). Ecofeminist theologians imagine different patterns of relating between God and world that can be described in 'agential-organic' terms (world as God's body, a body empowered by divine spirit) (McFague, 1993, p. 140). As the author explains, the agential model preserves transcendence, while the organic model underscores immanence. The agential model overemphasises the power of God at the expense of the world. Similarly, the organic model alone tends to collapse God and the world, denying the freedom and individuality of both. In the 'agential-organic' model suggested by McFague (1993) the values of both the agential and organic models can be preserved, and God is related to the world as spirit is related to body. Thus, God is not separate from, over, and above the Earth, but rather is a God who is in all things, and who binds one to deeper relationality, motivated by genuine mutuality and interdependence.

These non-dualistic patterns of relationships between God and the world are reflected in McFague's (1993) model of the universe as 'God's body.' This metaphor implies deep involvement, awareness and empathy with the Earth. To see the Earth as God's body profoundly change our relationship to it. McFague's image brings together immanence, transcendence, and the dignity of both creation and Creator. In her model God is not a distant, abstract deity, but a concrete, bodily one. According to this perspective God must not be mistakenly defined in pantheistic terms but rather in pan-en-theistic terms where the potentialities of life always are an open-ended possibility of all that is different and unpredictable (Gebara, 1995). This image helps one to see the world in the dialectic between human community and nature, as a web of life, which needs to be sustained by a loving community. The body is the whole; human beings cannot subjugate nature, and neither can the human community be subjugated under nature. There is a challenge to keep a balance.

The challenge posed for religious educators in designing a religious curriculum includes critical reflection on the traditional images of God that set God off from the world or equates God with spirit. Ecofeminist theologians encourage challenging the monarchic images of God and suggest images of a God of justice who is concerned for all marginalised and oppressed. McFague (1987) suggests a 'thought experiment,' with metaphors and concepts so as to formulate a new unified and interdependent framework for understanding God-world relationships. She encourages entering into 'the most radical kind of deconstruction and reconstruction of the tradition' (McFague 1987, p. 20). This process involves both a critique of domineering images of God and experimenting with new images that are commensurate with ecological sensibility of the Christian faith. She believes that new metaphors in naming God can serve in recontextualising the present dominant metaphor of Father in a parental rather than patriarchal direction. The metaphor of a Friend suggested by McFague (1987) indicates the intrinsic value of all creation. She suggests considering God as Friend of the world and all creation. Implications for ecological relevance and responsibility are evident here: humans are challenged to be Godlike and care for the Earth.

The other metaphor of God as a lover also denotes the valuableness of the world. God as lover finds all species valuable, attractive, and precious. God as a lover underlines the importance of every body and the well-being of the whole Earth. As a lover God wants the creation to be whole and in balance. According this view sin is disordered love of self, and the refused to see the interconnectedness of world, the God, and ourselves. The awareness of this love gives courage to participate with God in building the Earth's wholeness and in acting for it.

Building Partnership in God–Human Relationships

In formulating these God-human relationships ecofeminist theologians begin by offering a critique of how Christian scriptures fostered all kinds of dualisms especially with reference to the text of Genesis Chapter 1. As Gray (1979) argues God who is, 'above all and beyond all' created a person to have domination over creation. This mythical story from Genesis Chapter 1 puts a man 'above' the rest of creation, and defines the existence of woman in relation to man as 'helpmate,' and therefore reinforces an androcentric view. The other account of the creation of the world in Genesis Chapter 2, can be described as anthropocentric. Different interpretations have blended the accounts in Chapters 1 and 2 into a single creation story so that both texts represent a hierarchical and anthropocentric view of the world. Both myths support two conceptual errors: (1) they identify maleness with humanity where man is superior to women; (2) they assert humanity's superiority over the rest of creation (Gray, 1979). God is related towards creation as a subject manipulating passive objects. This model reinforces similar patterns of relations of mastery in human relations. McFague (1997) claims that Christian theology promoted I—It or subject—object models of relatedness. In this authoritarian model, the self is 'nothing' in relation to the authority 'above,' and everything to any subject 'below.' The consequences of such thinking represent the patterns that tend to repeat themselves in relations between human beings: men viewed as superior to and the opposite of women.

Ecofeminist theologians pose a challenge for religious educators by prompting an alternative to hierarchical relations and offer a participatory image of divine – human relations. By deconstructing and reconstructing the dominant symbols of the Christian tradition, ecofeminists suggest using relational language to define God-human relations, keeping the liberation of the oppressed, including the Earth and all creatures, in central focus (McFague, 1987). While ecofeminists urge using feminine metaphors describing the Divine, there is also a danger of developing a one-sided view of 'the feminine' metaphors and stereotyping women's reality by characterising God only as nurturing and caring. Johnson (1992) argues that 'nurturing and tenderness do not exhaust the capacities of women. [...] Nor is intelligence and creative transformative agency beyond the scope of women's power without suffocating women's potential' (p. 54). Female imagery has a capacity to present God not only as nurturing, but also 'powerful, initiating, creating-redeeming-saving, and victorious over the powers of the world' (Johnson, 1992, p. 54). Ecofeminist

theologians believe that patriarchal metaphorical images should be discarded since they cannot express the reality of our time. They reject the traditional metaphors of God as a ruler or as a cosmic moralist, and they envision a new understanding of power and love that is compatible with feminist thinking. They regard images of God as king, lord, ruler, and patriarch as inappropriate, and suggest metaphors of mutuality, interdependence, caring and responsiveness. Ecofeminist thinkers suggest using relational language defying God-human relations. They put forward an encompassing agenda to deconstruct and reconstruct the central symbols of Christian tradition in favor of life and its fulfillment, including the Earth as a central focus.

Redefining the Vocation and Place of a Human in the Universe

The images of the human vocation in Christian tradition can be viewed within ancient cultural contexts. These images reflect the self-understanding of particular peoples. Christian tradition contains different perspectives on the human vocation. Today we can put the question of how the image of human vocation can be defined in light of our situation. The modern perception of the vocation of human as a master of all technological power to rule the Universe corresponds to the ancient biblical priestly view.

The anthropocentric model of domination that places humans over creation has been disastrous in building healthy relations towards the world. It has resulted in a narrow theoretical understanding of the world and the human person that has fostered a disastrous ideology and practice of exclusivity. Eco-theologians critique anthropocentrism as disastrous, logically inconsistent, morally objectionable, and incongruent with a genuinely open approach to the world. The anthropocentric position views the world as manipulated and controlled for human benefit as if it were a machine. This finds its expression in disastrous practice such as pollution and the degradation of fisheries and forests. In contrast to domineering and exploitative kind of relationships, ecofeminist theologians suggest different patterns of relatedness between the person and the world which are based on values of partnership and stewardship. The term 'partnership' is used in the New Testament for describing the values of sharing and mutual community. Russell (1986) refers to the biblical vision of New Creation: Solidarity between the whole of the created universe—humanity, nature, and God' (p. 26). An appropriate metaphor for our times would be stewardship in describing human-world relationships. Thus, as Wilkinson (1980) writes, the vocation of a person is to be a steward of creation. And to be fully a steward of creation means 'accountability to God and embeddedness in nature that make the human perfectly constituted to carry out the task of stewardship' (p. 230). To be stewards also requires an understanding of justice, of just distribution of the world's resources, so that all human beings have their basic needs met and are in position to exercise the rights and responsibility of stewardship.

McFague (1993) suggests a metaphor of the world as God's body in locating person's place. She defines a person not as dominator but as a partner with God

in building a sustainable future. Likewise, Lucien (2001) argues, 'The body gives location, place, and concreteness to personal presence. The body is the reason that having home, being at home is an essential element of personal existence' (p. 14). Building healthy relations with the Earth means adopting not an attitude of a manipulator, but rather an attitude of hospitality. Lucien (2001) defines hospitality as a fundamental aspect of the Christian faith that is reflected in Paul's *Letter to the Ephesians*:

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone (Eph 2: 19–21, Revised Standard Version).

There are several strategies of sustainable living which can challenge religious educators today. For example, one of the alternative ways of living on the Earth is adopting a simple lifestyle. This does not imply traditional forms of asceticism, but rather means small actions such as adopting a simplistic lifestyle, abstaining from shopping, and contributing money and time for ecological works. Another response to the ecological crisis expressed by Johnson (2001) is 'a contemplative response.' This implies the affirmation of otherness and the ability to appreciate the beauty of nature for its own intrinsic value. Such perspective points to the uniqueness of every being. Another response is what Johnson (2001) calls 'a prophetic response' that gives the imperative to act in favor of care and restoration. In this way, ecofeminists see women as *image Dei* in the exercise of stewardship on the Earth.

Realising one's duty to be co-creators with God, the response, as (Durka & Smith, 1976) suggest, is to realise that both women and men have power and responsibility to reconstruct the world, reshape their lives, and create new option for future (p. 78). Such reconciliation and mutuality, 'offers pathways for yet further development' (p. 79). Thus, life becomes the very process of interaction between humans and the world whose emergent meaning depends 'on how intelligently we respond to the world's action upon us' (Durka & Smith 1976, p. 77).

To build new patterns of relatedness on all levels, such as God-world and a human person or human person and the world, religious educators suggest a need for a process of conscientisation and social change. Feminist consciousness speaks of an increased mental and emotional awareness of life experiences of women and others as marginalised. Raised consciousness of the marginalised initiates both a radical examination of one's reality, uncovering the structures and forces that oppress women, and a determination to move against those structures. Thus, feminist consciousness can be characterised as 'a process of becoming aware of oneself and one's surrounding' (Finson, 1987, p. 65). For a new consciousness to emerge, it is necessary to reject associating femininity with passivity. It requires adopting 'a variety of ways to approach things from a distinctively feminine point of view' (Durka, 1982, p. 75). In the process of conscientisation, a birth of one's voice takes place. This process of birthing that confirms: 'bodyliness, enfleshment, new life, passion, emotions, and pain...It tells us that we also bear responsibility for

ourselves, to other selves, and for the Earth' (Harris, 1988, p. 87). Merton describes this process of birthing as follows:

We have experienced creation, not re-creation, or new creation, but a primordial creation of ourselves. In the new shape of our experience, we have confronted death, but not death of the self, but death to self. We have experienced the death of the stereotyped images, the breaking of them from within so that self can be affirmed and potentialised (Merton, as cited in Harris, 1988, p. 85).

Feminist religious educators believe that when people arrive at critical awareness they have a capacity to recreate and transform the world, and therefore, build new models of relationships between humans themselves, between humans and God, and between the Universe. As Durka (1990) illustrates, Freire's liberating theory provides insights about how to better understand and change situations that are oppressive to a person. The movement is through stages: first, from magical conforming, where oppression is denied; to naïve reforming, where personal reforms are taking place; to the stage of critical transformation which takes place within both the self and the system.

Ecofeminist religious educators suggest multiple strategies of action as a response to a multiple factors of any situation. According to Moore (1998) if only one definition of the problem and one strategy for action are put forth, the likely result is an inadequate response to the problem. She suggests four different kinds of politics towards engaging students in transformative social action. These are the politics of suspicion, politics of grace, politics of future, and politics of solidarity. The politics of suspicion means being suspicious and naming and facing norms, symbols and assumptions underlying institutional rules. Thus, students with a raised consciousness will become aware of ecological disaster and other evils. A politics of grace means fostering one's relationships with God and the Earth, wrestling with incompatibilities across class, race, culture, and gender; and building solidarity with other communities. The politics of grace will lead to a politics of future that implies envisioning a transformed world – ecological, personal, social, and global. Finally, the politics of friendship and solidarity will help befriending the stranger, offering hospitality to the outsider, oppressed, rejected, or silenced. It also means encouraging wider conversation. Here Moran's (1989) metaphor of 'the second language' is useful in promoting such a dialogue. This means adopting a respect for the second language by responding to the needs of all students, and by inviting the assistance of those who have a better facility with the language (O'Gorman, 1992, p. 616).

Religious educators are challenged to help students develop a consciousness and code of behavior regarding their relationships with the natural world as an integral part of their spiritual development and practice. This entails helping students to reinterpret important sources within the tradition—scriptures, symbols, beliefs, and ethical principles—that affect attitudes and practices related to the environment. This will help students to uncover new deeper layers of understanding and meaning at the core of their tradition in terms of their relevance for today's global environmental

imperatives. It will also help students to grow in sensitivity and responsiveness to the sacredness of creation and to see the connectedness of the Universe (Mische, 2000).

Practical Implications for Religious Educators in Building Inclusive Community of Diverse Individuals

Ecological perspective helps one to envision a classroom as a community of learners, which is not narrowly viewed from the perspective of sociology, but rather as the highest value, that epitomises such qualities or principles as inclusion of diverse voices, interdependence and interrelatedness, and relatedness. Of all qualities of ecological vision Durka & Smith (1979) consider community as 'the most prominent fulfillment' (p. 104) of ecological vision. Similarly, as Dewey remarks: 'Under some conditions the completeness of the object gives the experience a quality so intense that it is justly termed 'religious'' (Dewey, as cited in Durka & Smith, 1979, p. 104). The authors conclude that community as the highest quality can be called 'holy' community, because its essence is communion, and communion is the essence of religious experience. Here 'people meet at the level of common humanity' (Scott, 1981, p. 149). Moran (1976, p. 142) also presents an ecological vision of community as the highest value which he describes as a 'universal sister/brotherhood'. Such a community includes humans and nonhumans in a relation that cultivates differences in unity.

This vision of community is not yet realised. It extends beyond the borders of community as a social form of organisation towards a quality of a human experience. This wider meaning of community implies a genuine human context of interdependence, mutual support and sense of belonging. 'It is marked by concerns and openness, shared values and visions, common meanings, and commitments. Essentially, it designates the particularity human way of being human vis-à-vis other people' (Scott, 1981, p. 148). The ideal embodied in community is 'the movement towards unity and union with others: community and communion' (Harris, 1989, p. 76). This ideal marks the time when 'all will be one,' 'a dream of a new heaven and a new earth where death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore' (Revelation 21). It is 'the move towards wholeness, unity and union' (Harris, 1989, p. 79).

This ideal of universal community can be realised on the micro scale of the classroom community when the curricular activities appropriately attend to fostering community. First, community can be fostered by attending to language in both the context and the process of teaching religion. Second, a classroom community that values differences can be built by including persons who are usually excluded by ethnic, gender, or other criteria. Such befriending acknowledges and accepts differences, and by practicing presence, receptivity, hospitality and care (Harris, 1989). The philosopher Marcel (1987) describes the meaning of presence in this way:

It is an undeniable fact, though it is hard to describe in intelligent terms, that there are some people who reveal themselves as 'present' – that is to say at our disposal. There is a way of listening, which is a way of giving, and another

way of listening, which is a way of refusing, of refusing oneself. The material gift, the visible action do not necessarily witness to presence... Presence is something, which reveals itself on a look, a smile, an intonation or a handshake (Marcel, as cited in Harris, 1989, p. 86).

Receptivity is the ability to listen not only to oppressed persons, but also to the voice of entire Creation. It leads towards listening to and including the voices of the non-human world. Hospitality, as Durka (2002) argues, is the feature that is easiest to recognise in the classroom setting. She highlights that when hospitality is not 'merely a superficial acceptance that glosses over differences' but is offered authentically and is born out of a deep commitment to the search for truth, it offers an opportunity for students to engage in deep conversation with one another, and to affirm: 'I am glad to be here' (p. 46). Such a warm and welcoming environment of acceptance 'generates deep conversations' and helps to 'build bridges among students' (p. 46). Classroom community also implies an ethic of care: care of oneself, others, the neighborhood, and for a sustainable society on the Earth. Genuine caring implies not only caring for one's needs, and desires, but caring for real different others, and the Earth as well. While care begins with oneself, and the particular people and grows gradually outward into care for all oppressed as the interlocking connections between different forms of need, discrimination and oppression become evident (Noddings, 1984).

Ecofeminist theologians such as McFague (1993, 1997) and Gebara (1999) advocate the principle of inclusivity which is not only an aesthetic appreciation of the intrinsic value of all forms of life but a different kind of thinking regarding the human and non-human world. The contribution of ecofeminist thinkers such as McFague and Gebara lies in challenging a mainstream feminist understanding of the uniformity of women's experiences. They are similar to Black feminists in that women's experiences are varied according to culture, class and race. They hold that what is common is gender oppression because it affects all cultures, races, and classes, while differences exist within the reality of gender.

Ecofeminism discloses how women's experience has been conditioned by the expectations of a patriarchal system of families, society, education, and religion. It determined what it means to be a woman, a wife, and what would be women's role in culture, politics, and religion. The effects are many. First, patriarchy repressed and devalued women's experience. Second, it absolutised male experience as representative of human experience in general. Ecofeminist theologians believe that by paying attention to their experience, women can begin to identify the 'myth of the feminine'. By naming the meaning of their experiences for themselves, women can begin to reject these myths, confront social oppression and open their birth for themselves (Ruether, 1995). Harris (1988), a religious educator, uses the metaphor of voice in describing women's journey from silence to listening to their voices, towards finding one's inner voice, and finally, integrating one's voice with others. Ecofeminist vision is all-inclusive. The process of finding one's voice implies not only striving to reclaim women's voices, but also the voices of others, and

'the voices of entire peoples' (Harris, 1988, p. 104). It enables religious educator to realise that curriculum is silent not only about women but also about many others without political power. Ecofeminist religious educators expand the term 'oppressed' to include all those without power, such as the poor, Third world people, and persons with mental and physical handicaps. The process of birthing allows women to engage in exploration of their voices. It involves the process of affirmation, liberation and transformation.

Another way of recognising a diversity of voices and experiences means teaching tolerance towards the other religious traditions (Moran, 1979). Helping students to appreciate one's own religious tradition, and developing students' sensibility to listen 'the second language' (Moran, 1989) means developing tolerance towards diverse traditions, experiences, and understandings.

In sum, inclusion of diverse voices and experiences is an essential quality of a classroom as an ecological community. It means that all students belong. It also includes the security, open communication, mutual thinking, shared goals and objectives so that the classroom becomes a place where everybody's experience is valued (Harris, 1989; Moore, 1989). The curriculum should be organised in such a way that teaches the responsibilities which extend towards all life on the planet. This means extending boundaries of community beyond immediate family and friends, and embracing all peoples. Such extension is a respect for the rights and needs of future generations that help students live by a sense of kinship with nature and an ethics of ecological responsibility. For ecofeminist theologians, human responsibility means actively participating in God's continuing creation by mending one's broken relations to the earth, to each other and to God. So, as Soelle (1984) concludes, 'The more a person develops creativity, delves into the project of liberation and transcends his or her limitation, the more God is God' (p. 24).

Conclusion

Challenges derived from ecofeminist theological thought and feminist pedagogy can become a viable source for building a more sustainable model of religious education. Ecofeminist theologians can contribute to religious education by offering a new theological vision that recognises the interconnections between all systems of oppression, rejecting all patterns of domination and exploitation, rethinking what it means to be a human person, and envisioning different understandings of God, world, and the human person. Ecofeminist theology envisions new ways of relating towards self, others, God, and the natural world. That can help religious educators to formulate a better vision of how to live appropriately on the Earth. Clearly, contribution of religious educators is in designing a curriculum for religious education that is inclusive of the experiences and voices of all marginalised and oppressed that is transformative of relations on all levels. Challenges derived from ecofeminist theological thought and feminist pedagogy play a significant role in reclaiming not only the experience of women, but also of those who are marginalised and oppressed, including non-human nature and the Earth.

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WHAT IS RISING? THE TEACHING OF MARIA HARRIS

Aileen Carlin Giannelli

Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, Fordham University

Introduction

Music was the background and the heart of Maria Harris's life as religious educator. The silence before the piece begins, the rests within it, the arpeggios that vitalise its progress, the thoughtful andantes that beckon the listener to reflection, the interweaving harmonies and dissonances, all serve as metaphors for both the process and the content of her work. She was born into a home filled with music. 'Her father, Edward, gave her mother, Mary, a Steinway baby grand piano as a wedding gift. The gift of this piano enabled her mother 'always' to play and sing, and Maria started at the age of five' (Dorney, 1997, p. 189). She was also born into a Catholic home located in New York City. For her, Catholicism shaped her heart, her mind, and her imagination so that they were 'essentially sacramental, essentially communal' (Dorney, 1997, p. 181). New York enriched her experience with a sense of the breadth and vitality of the human community.

Dr. Harris's journey as a religious educator began quietly when her religious community, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood, assigned her to teach music to elementary school children in 1952. As she prepared her students for liturgical worship, she came to understand that religious education cannot be limited to cognitive learning, but must address the aesthetic dimensions of a person's knowing (Dorney, 1997). In 1986 she wrote, 'A person speculating, thinking, knowing in the aesthetic mode does not think *about* objects: trees, rivers, clay, tone. A person knows *them*, thinks through *them*, in actual, concrete engagement' (Harris, 1986, p. 120).

Her journey from elementary school music teacher to national consultant in religious education and visiting professor at New York University included doctoral studies at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University in New York. The open window of the Second Vatican Council, accompanied by her experiences at Union Theological, brought new themes, new rhythms, new understandings to the song of her life, or as she might put it, to the dance of her spirit.

Like New York University today, Union Theological had a multidimensional, ecumenical student body and faculty population. This setting provided a medium in which to appreciate the religious understandings of others, particularly Protestants and Jews. Maria's doctoral work led her very consciously to reconceptualise the meaning of religious education (Dorney, 1997, p. 181).

Eventually she held both the Howard Chair of Religious Education at Andover Newton Theological School and the Tuohy Chair in Interrreligious Studies at John Carroll University in Cleveland, as well as teaching posts at numerous colleges and universities as diverse as Princeton, Fordham, Immaculate Conception Seminary, and the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. An international lecturer, well known in Korea, Ireland, Canada, Australia, Bermuda, New Zealand, Germany, and the Netherlands, Dr. Harris also served as Scholar in Residence at Loyola University in Chicago, and delivered the Bradner Lectures at Episcopal Theological Seminary, the Madaleva Lecture at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, the Pollock Lectures at the Atlantic School of Theology, Nova Scotia, and the Schaff Lectures at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Her published works, 13 books and over 85 articles, chart the development of her life and thinking from the practical *DRE handbook* (1971), to the theoretical *Teaching and the religious imagination* (1987), to the spiritual *Proclaim jubilee!* (1996).

Throughout her lifetime as a religious educator, Maria Harris developed what she called a 'lifelong and lifewide approach to learning and teaching' (Harris, 1998). The depth and richness of her published works defy easy summary. She always charged her students to be alert to what Elliot Eisner (1979) called the 'null curriculum,' the content and procedures of the curriculum that are left out. With the warning that much has been 'left out,' this essay will examine Maria Harris's work through three lenses, the rhythm of teaching and learning, the nature of knowing, and the creating of community.

Before examining her work through these lenses, it is essential to define what Harris meant by the term, 'religious education.' With her husband and colleague, Gabriel Moran (Harris & Moran, 1998), she identified two aims of religious education: first, educating people to take part in a particular religious tradition, *teaching the way*; and second, developing religious understanding, *teaching to understand religion*. She did not limit the term, 'religious,' to her own discipline, but saw all teaching as connecting with the numinous and the holy. She insisted '... to honor and teach the dimension of depth present in all education is to educate religiously' (in Dorney, 1997, p. 182).

Her convictions about the tasks of religious education have led her to question the commonly perceived views of what constitutes learning and knowing. For Harris, cognitive knowing must be completed and complemented by aesthetic knowledge, a knowledge that not only facilitates the mental capacities of imagining and envisioning, but also reaches out to all of the senses and brings them to the service of the religious and the spiritual (Harris, 1979).

In discussing community, Maria Harris paid special attention to the needs of women from the earliest years to what she terms the 'jubilee' years at the end of

life (Harris, 1995). While the advancement of women holds a special place in her writing and teaching, her design for community casts a wider net. She proposed a community of inclusion, based on service and justice, attentive not only to feminism, but also to the demands of ecumenism and a committed reverence for creation (Harris, 1989; 1988).

Dr. Harris encouraged the notion that the advancement of knowledge and the creation of community are only possible when they are developed through a rhythm, a dance, a series of steps that flow in and out of each other.

This article will explore the themes of knowing, community, and rhythm in Maria Harris's life and work. She has been called one of the 'foremothers and mentors' of religious education (Keely, 1997). It is hoped that examining the dance of her spirit will provide both theological and practical guidance for those who have embraced the vocation of religious educator.

Rhythm

Basic to an understanding of Harris's work in religious education is her conviction that teaching is a religious act. Drawing on the insights of feminist, process, and liberation theologies, she proposed a spirituality of teaching. She observed that we cannot say a word, we cannot read a text, we cannot write an essay without trying to walk with God, without trying to touch God, even if we are not aware of the walking, the touching (Harris, 1988, p. 12). The music at the centre of her heart flowed out into her vision of this spirituality. She said, 'I will be working from the basic truth—asserted by modern physics and by process theology—that the core of things is not substance, it is rhythm: movement, ongoing discovery, continuing, unfolding (Harris, 1988, p. 13). In the *Madaleva Lecture in Spirituality*, given in 1988, she described five generative steps that not only provide a theoretical basis for a spirituality of teaching, but also describe a practical pedagogy for pursuing a religious education curriculum. The steps are silence, remembering, ritual mourning, artistry, and birthing.

Educators are familiar with the steps, or stages, of developmental theorists. These are usually envisioned as a staircase where one step logically and unalterably follows the other until the goal is reached. True to her musical heart, and crediting collegial conversations with Judith Dorney, Harris rejected this notion.

But the series of steps I want to pose in contrast are in a different form: they are steps in a dance. Using this metaphor, we can immediately draw on the power of rhythm, and study how in the work of spirituality and teaching, a more organic and human series of steps than the ladder and the staircase are those which like a dance can go backward and forward, can incorporate one another, can involve turn and re-turn, can move down as well as up, out as well as in, and be sometimes partnered, and sometimes solitary (1988, pp. 14–15).

For her, movement through the steps cannot be planned beforehand, but must emerge from the rhythm of engagement with the world, context, environment, and task.

Silence

Harris saw silence as a demon to be exorcised and a healer to be embraced. Drawing on the work of Elliot Eisner (1979), she explored the three curricula that live at the heart of every curriculum: the explicit, the implicit, and the null. Religious educators know and embrace the explicit curriculum. It is clear, outlined in the syllabus, printed in the teacher's manual and text. The implicit curriculum refers to the structure of the teaching, the environment for learning, the pattern of speaking and listening. The implicit curriculum is surfaced by paying attention to who speaks, who is heard, how concepts are shared. Is the teacher the expert filling empty vessels or are the students involved in the discourse? Is teaching focused on cognitive learning or are multiple intelligences addressed?

The null curriculum poses something of a paradox. 'This is the curriculum which exists because it does not exist, for it refers to areas left out, ideas not addressed, concepts not offered' (Harris, 1988, p. 20). In its silence, the null curriculum speaks mightily. In *Man for all seasons*, Cromwell charges that Thomas More's silence is 'bellowing up and down Europe' (Bolt, 1960, p. 98). Harris warned that educators can miss the null curriculum. Sometimes the explicit curriculum, and by extension, the explicit pedagogy, is so entrenched that it has taken on the costume of what is natural, real, exclusively authentic. In *Women and teaching* (1988) Harris urged educators to examine and name the silences in the content and methodology of their teaching so that those silences can be addressed. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza (1984) suggested that scholars employ a hermeneutic of suspicion to question underlying assumptions, models, and interests, and then employ a hermeneutic of imagination to restore what has been omitted. Harris agreed. For her, it is in healing silence, in thick listening, that the implicit and null curricula can be brought to light.

Paradoxically, healing silence can manifest itself in a refusal to be silent, but rather to use voice to affirm and challenge the implicit and null curricula. It can also encourage teachers to listen to the silences of students, to wait for that silence to work, and to lead students to authentic voice. Of great importance for the religious educator 'is to remember that all music has places of rest and that a spirituality of pedagogy must have room for prayerful silence' (Harris, 1988, p. 30).

Remembering

Remembering arises out of silent listening. Mythic memories, dangerous memories of freedom and suffering in an individual's life surface through silence to enrich and challenge the present. Remembering the mythic figures and stories allows the teacher to recall, reclaim, reintegrate, or reject them. 'The mythic demand in remembering is the demand of facing our own pasts and our own presents, discovering in doing so that the monster is after all not our enemy' (Harris, 1988, p. 33).

Re-telling ancient stories is not enough. Teachers and learners must enter the dangerous territory of personal and communal memories of suffering and freedom: opportunities denied and doors suddenly opened; unbearable losses and healed

relationships; slavery and rights regained; irrational destruction of creation and courageous commitment to life in all of its forms.

...because we are all 'in Christ' as other aspects of the Imago Dei, we may say that anamnesis is an aspect of all teaching, especially if we believe the teaching act is a religious act. As such, it becomes a further ritual of Remembering where as teachers and learners we re-enter the past and make it our own; we re-view the lives of others and incorporate them into ours; we rediscover unspoken words and allow them to speak to us (Harris, 1988, p. 43).

Ritual Mourning

The next step in the dance Harris proposed is ritual mourning. Surfacing memories often brings tremendous feelings of loss, pain, and rage. Engaging in a solo dance of mourning 'can turn inward, lead us to continue portraying ourselves as victims if we are already doing so, and keep us stuck in a pattern of denial' (Harris, 1988, p. 50). What is needed is the recognition that others have shared the experience of pain and loss. Connecting with others in communal mourning not only allows teachers and learners to find strength in dealing with their own grief, but also opens the way to societal mourning in grief over 'the suffering touching any woman, and child, any man anywhere, as well as the cosmic suffering of the planet itself' (p. 53). For Harris the heart of mourning is grief over the absence of justice.

Rituals of mourning allow those who grieve to walk down the passageway from remembering to imagining a new way of teaching and learning and living. Religious traditions provide rituals of mourning that can be re-cast to fit the need or new rituals can be developed to allow mourners to 'name the pain, face it, surface it, and then grant it burial' (Harris, 1988, p. 58).

Artistry

The dance does not end with burial. A new way of being must be envisioned; a solution discerned; a change embraced. Many would name this step 'imagining,' but Harris rejected this term. She insisted '...*Artistry* is a wider term which obviously has meaning for all the senses. (Harris, 1988, p. 61). Citing the work of Susanne Langer (1957), Harris calls on teachers to use hearing, touch, space, visuals, voice, and word to help students and themselves to develop visions, possibilities, and plans to enrich their lives as well as the life of the wider community. Critical to this step is the teacher's ability to release the student, to let go. Harris said of 'release'

...it is important in the creative act of molding, as in the spirituality of teaching, where a person must say, 'I can do no more,' and where the appropriate thing to do is to let go. To do otherwise is to claim time – a

present and a future – which is not ours to claim. For the other is on her or his own, and the movement now demanded of the teacher is the cessation of movement, or rest, or emptiness (1988, p. 74).

Birthing

The next, but not the final step in Harris's spirituality of pedagogy is birthing. This step 'envision[s] a learner as an elemental force, bearing within the power to recreate everything: the self, the universe, God' (Harris, 1988, p. 77). It calls the students to enter into the world of justice, not only to give birth to a better image of the self, but also, to create the necessary conditions for a just society.

Birthing demands that the teacher step aside into the role of midwife. Harris cited the work of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule who in *Women's ways of knowing* (1986), describe the qualities of a midwife-teacher. Such teachers do not deposit knowledge in a student's head, but draw out what is already there. They do not anaesthetise their students, but encourage them to think for themselves, to speak in their own authentic voices. The first concern of such teachers is 'to preserve the student's fragile newborn thoughts, to see that they are born with their truth intact, that they do not turn into acceptable lies' (p. 218). Midwife-teachers know that their students' knowledge is their own and that their job is 'to put the students into conversation with other voices—past and present—in the culture' (p. 219). Finally, midwife-teachers open students to the possibilities of using their knowledge in daily life.

Building on these concepts, Harris proposed that 'the role of Midwife is the community's, even more than it is that of the individual teacher' (1988, p. 83). The demands of justice require the broader community whether it be the local school or the central government to shape the societal environment so that it can and does facilitate the activity of birthing.

Harris does not recognise birthing as the *final* step. She said, There is no last moment. Instead there is a continuing dance and a continuing rhythm, where artistry blends into remembering as well as into birthing, where mourning appears in the midst of silence as well as remembering, and where silence itself belongs to all other themes (1988, p. 90).

Maria Harris's dance does not end. It may pause to take time for peace and reflection, but only that it may begin again.

Knowing

Citing an over-reliance on psychology throughout the 20th century, Harris challenged the equating of knowing with one form of knowing, the cognitive dimension. In particular she questioned the adequacy of cognitive faith development theory. She raised the following questions in 'Completion and faith development' (1986):

1. Does cognitive faith development draw exclusively on verbal, discursive responses?
2. Does it force hierarchical and/or linear imaging of faith?
3. Does it implicitly teach that human faith is an overwhelmingly rational reality?
4. Does it miss the shock of the new?
5. Does it prejudice alternative interpretations and push the idea of a *final* interpretation?
6. How essential are the assignments of certain stages to certain ages? (pp. 120–122)

Harris found in the answers to these questions a case for asserting the necessity of attending to the aesthetic dimensions of knowing and learning. She saw ‘the aesthetic with its avoidance of any one answer as *the* solution and its susceptibility to multiple interpretations’ (Harris, 1979, p. 143) as a corrective to the issues raised in an examination of cognitive theory. However, she warned, ‘...dealing with the aesthetic, the artistic, the non-discursive is NOT a denigration of the world of discourse and rationality, but a complementing of it...’ (p. 150). Indeed, Harris saw aesthetic knowing as the completion of knowing.

Throughout her work in this area, Harris acknowledged her debt to Susanne Langer who in *Philosophy in a new key* (1969) described a way of knowing that employs non-discursive words, sound, silence, stone, wood, color, line, shape, and the human body itself to discover and express in symbol and metaphor those ‘unspeakable’ realities which reside in mystery, integrity, and uncertainty and resist dissection and categorisation (Harris, 1986, pp. 117–119).

Outlining a course in the aesthetic dimensions of religious education, Harris (1979) discussed three conceptual poles around which the course was organised: word, world, and wisdom (pp. 147–150). ‘Word’ refers to the presence, or absence, of verbal symbolism. While discussion of concepts is usually a component of the course, it is presentational symbolism, realised through poetry, drama, literature, and silence which constitutes the verbal heart of the curriculum. ‘World’ invites students into relationship with the stuff of the earth: clay, paint, water, nature, bodiliness. Its purpose is to break through ‘our everlastingly talkative ecclesial circles’ into conversation with the natural elements of life (Harris, 1979, p. 147). ‘Wisdoms’ refers to the learnings that emerge from the course. In ‘A model for aesthetic education’ (1979), Harris identified four wisdoms that seem most significant:

1. Foolishness—which teaches the students that not all knowledge is of practical use; that the more than rational exists and nourishes human life; and that trying something in which the learner is not expert teaches valuable lessons in humility and fitness.
2. Creativity—which calls for detachment from the outcome, passion, immediacy, deferral of satisfaction, yielding to the process and the material.

3. Wholeness—which affirms a sense of integration nourished by ‘encountering the materials universe, and working in the intuitive, the imaginative, and the perceptual modes more proper to art’ (p. 150).
4. Worship—which invites the students to acknowledge dependence on the divine and on one another.

Harris’s challenge to religious educators to embrace art as ‘the primordial form of knowing through our bodiliness’ (1986, p. 120) relates strongly to her conviction that the dance never ends and that the answer is never final.

Community

Community of the Way

In naming the two goals of religious education as teaching a way and teaching to understand religion (Harris & Moran, 1998), Harris identified two communities to be formed and promoted through religious education. The first is a community of believers who embrace a particular ‘way’ and teach others ‘how to live and how to die by embodying this religious ‘way’ through a set of beliefs, symbols and rituals’ (p. 44). Harris posed three questions for religious educators trusting that the answers would illumine the nature of the community and the most effective ways of transmitting and sharing it. Her questions were: what is living; what is dying; what is rising? She answered these questions from her own perspective as a Catholic Christian in hopes ‘that *mutatis mutandis* – the necessary changes being made – others might do the same in their respective religious homes’ (p. 44).

What is living in the Catholic Church today? Harris responded

1. that it is becoming a church of the laity;
2. that it is marked by a hunger for spirituality;
3. that the spirituality that is being sought is connected, relational and communal in character, placing justice in a privileged place;
4. that catechists are called to the role of midwives;
5. that eucharistic spirituality is at the heart of it all.

She asserted the final point in the face of the crisis in priestly ordination by noting the sacramental consciousness of Catholics throughout the world and by proposing that, ‘For, although eucharistic *forms* are changing, eucharistic *essence* is not’ (Harris & Moran, 1998, p. 47).

In answering the second question, ‘What is dying?’ Harris pointed out the following:

1. that current structures are dying;
2. that assumed privilege has given way to a call for justice for the poor, the marginalised, and the disadvantaged;

3. that privilege without responsibility is no longer acceptable;
4. and finally, that a whole generation is moving toward death.

She urged religious educators to add to their roles of teacher and midwife the role of mourner for all that is dying and all who are dying. 'The role of mourner means that in the face of loss we must do what hospice workers are taught to do: show up, pay attention, tell the truth, and ignore worry about the results' (Harris & Moran, 1998, p. 52).

The 'sense of the faithful' is what is rising for Harris. She referred to the *Encyclopedia of Catholicism* for a definition of the term

The sense of the faithful is the intuitive grasp of the truth of God that is possessed by the church as a whole as a consensus. It is active discernment, a power that belongs to the body of the faithful in response to God as Spirit (quoted in Harris & Moran, 1998, p. 53).

She also found the tradition of the cosmic Christ present in the whole world, human and non-human rising. She pointed out that the resurrected Christ does not exhaust the reality of the resurrection.

But because he didn't – and doesn't – rise alone, Christians fill up what is wanting in Christ even as they acknowledge that there are other religious communions. We are at best *a* people of God, and not in possession of the fullness of truth (Harris & Moran, 1998, p. 54).

In helping to form a community of the 'way,' religious educators must serve as witnesses, and perhaps martyrs, to this task.

Community of Understanding—Feminism

Harris's assertion that the community of the 'way' is *a* people of God, not *the* people of God, points to the inclusiveness of her vision. Starting from the liberation perspectives of feminism, she critiqued her own Catholic tradition, as well as the canons and practices of the field of education. She wrote that 'Experience as we usually write, teach, study about, and conceptualise it, is that of white men, more specifically, powerful white men' (Harris, 1986, p. 122.) Her focus on women and the cultivation of authentic voice in women and girls arose from her participation in the work of developing a feminist approach to religious education. Rosemary Radford Ruether (1983) proposes that

The critical principle of feminist theology is the promotion of the full humanity of women. Whatever denies, diminishes, or distorts the full humanity of women is, therefore, appraised not redemptive. Theologically speaking, whatever diminishes or denies the full humanity of women must be presumed

not to reflect the divine or an authentic relation to the divine, or to reflect the authentic nature of things, or to be the message or work of an authentic redeemer or a community of redemption (pp. 18–19).

This critical principle resonates with Harris's insistence that educators play close attention to implicit and null curricula, engage in the process of surfacing dangerous memories, and engage in acts of ritual mourning arising from the grief and loss related to those memories.

Maria Harris urged educators 'to break the silence that surrounds the terrible, terrible risks to the spirits of too many girl children in our world' (Harris & Moran, 1998, p. 77). She supported her position by citing U.N.I.C.E.F. statistics documenting not only the loss of voice among girls, but also the loss of health, bodily integrity, and life itself.

In *Dance of the spirit* (1989), Harris proposed that women *awaken* to the reality of their lives, *discover* their gifts and the communities that will support them, *create* their lives and their worlds, *dwell* in their place or leave it behind, and *nourish* not only themselves, but also those who need care in our world. In later work, she added two additional steps to the dance, *traditioning* or handing on what is best in life through parenting, teaching, mentoring, and modeling, and finally, *transforming* the face of the earth so that it will be 'hospitable to the young, the fragile, and the needy' (Harris & Moran, 1998, p. 79).

Often religious education, especially teaching the 'way,' is associated with the education of the young. Harris insisted that education must be lifelong and lifewide. Arising from her commitment to the growth of women and girls came her passion for the 'jubilee years.' In *Jubilee time* (1995), she described the lives and spirituality of women who are crossing the threshold of their fiftieth year, the biblical year of jubilee. The challenge for religious educators during these years is to mold a curriculum and develop a pedagogy that will help jubilarians to acquire wisdom, achieve wholeness, practice mature moral responsibility, and learn the way of detachment (Harris & Moran, 1998).

Harris's attention to the movements of feminism and to the important stages of her own life helped her to grasp the importance of two other great concerns: ecumenism and ecology.

Ecumenism and Ecology

Early in her childhood in New York City, Maria Harris came into close and loving contact with Jewish neighbors who reached out in compassion to her family when her father died. Her experiences at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University enriched her experience of Christians of various denominations and Jews of various traditions. In describing Harris' ecumenism, Dorney wrote: 'Her teaching experiences overseas, in places such as Australia, Bermuda, New Zealand, and Korea, continues to deepen her perspective that religious education is what all people do to honor and extend religious presence in their midst' (1997, p. 182).

Her ecumenism did not wear the smiling face of religious toleration, but the determined face of the learner who truly values what others have to teach, and the prophetic face of an enraged Jeremiah who thunders in the face of injustice. In *Women and teaching* (1988), Dr. Harris challenged religious educators.

In Christian educational circles, for example, we have yet to re-member in any integrated way that great fissure of evil crossing the twentieth century, the destruction of European Jewry—more specifically, the Christian preparation for, participation in, and responsibility toward our Jewish brothers and sisters—before the holocaust and since (pp. 40–41).

References to the religious insights of Buddhism, Islam, Orthodoxy, Protestant traditions, and nature religions enrich her work. She was convinced that ‘God emerges in Buddhist, in Sikh, in Hindu, in Muslim, and especially in Jewish tradition...’ (Harris & Moran, 1998, p. 54). She was particularly aware of the contributions of Native Americans and the aboriginal people of Australia to contemporary spirituality. She wrote

Earth, water, fire, wind: these were ordinary realities that impelled us to awe. With modern industrial practice, however, many of these ordinary spheres of life have been injured and, along with the pollution of water and the dissolution of part of the ozone layer, we have lost the wisdom that directed us to look for holiness in our environment (Harris & Moran, 1998, p. 110).

Thick listening to the words and the silences of native peoples are helping industrialised people recapture their sense of the numinous in nature. ‘Today, indigenous people are helping the rest of us to discover the living water in our own lives and communities through a renewed spirituality’ (Harris & Moran, 1998, p. 110).

Spirituality demands justice, according to Harris. Justice includes paying attention to the interconnectedness of every atom on this planet. She was fond of saying, ‘Justice means we find out what belongs to whom and we give it back’ (Harris & Moran, 1998, p. 128). Along with the need to redress the imbalances in material wealth, education, and decision-making power, Harris challenged all people to ‘give back’ integrity and fecundity to the land, the seas, and the air.

Conclusion

Maria Harris’s contributions to religious education have been greater than this essay can suggest. Her theoretical work has proved profoundly practical. Classes in the aesthetic dimensions of religious education have proliferated. The steps of her dance from silence to remembering to mourning to artistry to birthing have been used in weekly meetings designed to intervene in the lives of at-risk students. The exercises in *Fashion me a people* (1989) and *Jubilee time* (1995) have provided the structure for parish and small community discussions. Her written work was complemented by her presence, by the model of enthusiasm, serious reflection,

unending compassion, and grace-filled humor that her students, audiences, and colleagues always met in her. That presence shone most brilliantly in the last years of her life when she struggled through a degenerative illness to connect, to continue to dance, and finally, in a grace-filled model of artistry, to let go. Maria Harris died on February 1, 2005. Her students would say, 'too soon;' she would say, 'just in time with the dance of the spirit.' In her death she reminds us that there is no 'final' word – the dance continues.

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IT TAKES MORE THAN ANGELS: THE LEGACY OF SOPHIA LYON FAHS TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Lucinda A. Nolan

Religious Education and Catechetics, The Catholic University of America

Introduction

And now our generation is yearning with a new hope. We realise we must somehow live together as one world-community without wars, negotiating our differences rather than forcing the weaker party to submit to the stronger. Mutual understanding must replace prejudice. Trust in one another's word must replace suspicion. Accenting our common aims must replace exaggerating our differences. Seeing good in our enemies must be substituted for seeing only evil. Honesty must take the place of deceit. Study of the things that make for peace must supersede study of the things that make for war. We must learn ways to encourage people rather than ways to vanquish them. (Sophia Lyon Fahs, 1952, p. 143)

These prophetic words were written over fifty years ago by Sophia Lyon Fahs (1876–1978), a noted religious educator, lecturer, speaker, author and editor whose career spanned nearly three quarters of the twentieth century. Her progressive, creative and liberal ideas concerning the religious education of children have shaped the educative practices of many Christian denominations. Her long and distinguished career led to international recognition as a pioneer and innovator in the religious education of children. Because much of her work was translated into other languages, including Japanese, Turkish and Esperanto, her influence has been much more global in its effects than that of other educators of her time.

Fahs reacted against religious education as mere transmission of doctrine and children's schools of religion as solely Bible schools. She challenged religious

educators to make full use of the child's curiosity and sense of wonder and cautioned them to refrain from presenting complex scriptural notions before the child is developmentally capable of such an task. A great observer of children, she became aware of the questions that were of concern to them and fashioned her lessons around their interests. No topic, in Fahs's view, was outside the realm of religious education.

Like other Protestant liberal religious educators of her time, including William Rainey Harper and George Albert Coe, Fahs was deeply influenced by the work of John Dewey. She saw religion, not as something to be added to experience, but as a component of all experience, to be discovered and explored through a process of reverent inquiry. A vital religion was a matter of the totality of all experience. The aim of religious education, in her thought, was to help others recognise the religious dimensions of even the most ordinary of human experiences.

Longing to improve the education of children in church schools, Sophia Lyon Fahs envisioned a comprehensive curriculum for children's religious education that would build on the natural cycle of growth and development of children rather than on Bible memory work. Fahs thought that church schools which introduced doctrinal and scriptural materials to the young too soon impaired the child's ability to develop his or her own religious sensibilities and to appreciate the values inherent in other religions. In her view, even the youngest children had religious experiences of their own that were the very foundations upon which a mature religious outlook could be built. 'Would it be possible to build the curriculum of a Sunday school around some of these experiences, so real to children, so important to them, and yet so universal, shared by all the children in the family of man?' (Hunter, 1966a, p. 38). The result of such a process would be widening and deepening human sympathies toward all of God's creation leading toward the eventual transformation of human society into 'a new world brotherhood' (Fahs, 1952, p. 154) or, in today's language, a global community. Such a philosophy of religious education would involve marked changes in the usual assumptions regarding the development of reverent and worshipful attitudes in the mind.

Children need opportunities to discover in their own experiencing how our lives are intertwined, and so to have their imaginations enlarged and their empathies deepened. (Fahs, 1965a, p. 15)

Sophia Lyon Fahs realised that such a transformation would 'take more than angels' (1937, p. 153). It meant nothing short of a reformation in religious education. It would necessitate reconciliation between science and religion. It would mean a reexamination of religious symbols and traditions in light of new historical scholarship. The new discipline of psychology needed to be applied to all aspects of the child's life, including the church school classroom. It would require no less than the noblest and most courageous of efforts of all those concerned with the religious growth of children: parents, families, teachers, schools, congregations, and communities.

A Lifelong Religious Quest

Sophia Blanche Lyon was born in 1876 to Mandana and David Lyon, Presbyterian missionaries who as newlyweds had decided to accept a mission field in Hangchow, China. Their faithful spirit and dedicated sacrifice to their chosen vocation had a lasting impression on young Sophia who came to understand that her parents' 'devotion to goals beyond their own personal fulfillment was a priceless part of her heritage' (Hunter, 1966b, p. 7). For many years Sophia, caught up in the missionary enthusiasm of the time, dreamed of becoming a missionary (Hunter, 1966b, p. 42). While her educational pursuits were toward this goal, she later became critical of the exclusive claims of Christian supremacy inherent in some missionary tactics.

After graduating from Wooster, a small Presbyterian College in Ohio, Fahs enrolled in scripture courses in the new Higher Criticism at the University of Chicago under the tutelage of William Rainey Harper and Ernest Burton DeWitt. The ideas put forth by these two professors exhilarated young Sophia. She began to gradually discard the evangelical religion of her childhood as she was drawn more deeply into modern Protestant liberalism. At the turn of the century, there were the stirrings of new theological undercurrents in the United States. These currents were put into motion by insights from historical criticism, the new science of psychology, and modern pedagogical practices. The religious imagination of Sophia Lyon Fahs was like a sponge absorbing both liberal theology and the progressive philosophy of religious education.

In 1902, Sophia Lyon married Charles Harvey Fahs, the newly appointed editor of the Methodist monthly, *World Wide Missions*. As his wife, Sophia had the opportunity to meet missionaries from all over the world, to make use of the Missionary Research Library, and to share her husband's interest in religions of the world and cultural anthropology. Consequently, her work in religious education and curriculum design became more ecumenical and inclusive over the coming years.

Sophia Lyon Fahs studied elementary education at Columbia University's Teachers College where she taught in the experimental Sunday school. One of her professors, Frank McMurry, whose teaching emphasised the primacy of experience in childhood education, introduced Fahs to the field of religious education and the progressive thought of John Dewey (Hunter, 1966b, p. 58). McMurry's teaching and Dewey's understanding of education as the reconstruction of experience inspired the young teacher, and she immediately began putting these new ideas to work in her classes. Years later, Fahs recalled:

John Dewey's dynamic propositions were not simply congenial to my own thinking, they motivated me to pursue their implications in the total process of learning how to live valuably (religiously) in the natural world. They also impelled me to test their potential and to raise devastating questions regarding the common ways of seeking the religious development of children. (1965b, p. 3)

While Fahs never personally studied with Dewey, he became and remained the single-most influential figure in her work and writing.

Through her work with Frank McMurry at Teachers College, Fahs became affiliated with the Religious Education Association. Her philosophy of religious education embodied the association's founding principles, and she shared its emphasis on historical biblical criticism and concern for reconciling science and religion. She wrote extensively over several decades in the association's journal, *Religious Education*. In 1972, the General Secretary of the Religious Education Association described Fahs as 'one of the truly great pioneers of religious education in the 20th century, in the company of Harrison Elliott, Frank McMurry and George Albert Coe' (Kathan, 1972, p. 6).

In 1923 Fahs enrolled in the Bachelor of Divinity program at Union Theological Seminary where, upon graduation, she was appointed as one of the first two women on the faculty of religious education. Having already made a name for herself in the field as an author and innovative teacher, Fahs blossomed under the progressive, liberal administration of UTS. Her tenure was, however, not without its share of controversy, and Fahs proved a formidable opponent to those who would challenge her heavy emphasis on the centrality of human experience in both theology and education. The tensions between Modernists and Fundamentalists were at their height in the 1920s, evidenced especially in the public arena by the Scopes trial of 1925. Union Theological Seminary and Fahs were deeply embroiled in the controversy. 'If the first two persons of the demonic trinity enthroned at Union Theological Seminary, as far as the Fundamentalists were concerned, were Modernism and the Social Gospel, the third person was the new religious education' (Hunter, 1966b, p. 158).

By the 1930s, Sophia Lyon Fahs had become a recognised leader and a rare woman author and speaker in the field. Her wealth of experience in church school education, supervision and administration brought her national and international recognition as an expert in the field of the religious education of children. In 1937, at the age of sixty-one, Sophia Lyon Fahs was named Editor of Children's Materials for Unitarian religious education. Under her editorship *The New Beacon Series* became a landmark curriculum for many liberal church groups and was translated into several languages, parts of it still in use today. In 1959, at the age of eighty-two, Sophia Fahs was ordained a minister in the Unitarian Church. Her legacy has been described as a 'New Ministry to Children' that included the call to move away from transmissive, authoritarian teaching toward an experientially based study of religion that would allow for the child's natural developmental process of learning and growth and the incorporation of new findings in all disciplines of modern scholarship (Beck, 1978, p. 714). As she experienced the many religious transitions of her life, from evangelical Presbyterianism, to Methodism and later to Unitarianism, Fahs's religious thought broadened and she grew to understand that religious education must occur in a global context, with the aim of producing a peaceful, universal community. Her long career in religious education left a lasting legacy of the centrality and importance of allowing for the natural development of religious sensibilities in children.

A Creative and Courageous Philosophy of Religious Education

The sense of teaching as a vocation involves a measure of determination, courage and flexibility rather than a sense of heroism. The teacher's calling is sustained by a sense that the work of teaching is an activity whose meaning is larger than the sum of its parts. (Durka, 2002, p. 7)

Sophia Lyon Fahs, the teacher, demonstrated a continuing concern and love for children, a remarkable measure of courage, and a great deal of imaginative creativity throughout the course of her long and distinguished career. Her work serves as a model of a religious education that has at its core the hope of world transformation (Nolan, 2004).

Fahs's belief that religion is not something to be added to the child's experience but rather a quality of all their experiences led her to view teaching as a sacred activity. Few since have shown such courageous dedication in pursuit of educational reform. Fahs sensed that what she was working to achieve was well worth the struggle and that she would need others of like heart and mind to join her in pursuit of a new kind of ministry with children.

Challenged by both evangelical and neo-orthodox thinkers, Fahs maintained a liberal theological perspective and a progressive educational outlook throughout her life. While she accepted the criticism of being overly optimistic about human nature, she sought to balance the naïve liberalism of progressivism with a measure of realism in her work. Fahs remained steadfast in her belief that a transmissive religious education was harmful to the child's unfolding and fragile sense of religion. Children should have the opportunity to develop their own concepts of God before doctrinal formulations were imposed upon them, even by well-intended parents or teachers. 'Fahs observed that genuine religion grows proportionately as children experience the passions and problems that comprise 'growing up;' that genuine religion constitutes a questioning spirit that searches sincerely rather than some systematically expressed, divinely inspired truth' (Chandler, 1989, pp. 542–543).

Sophia Lyon Fahs's willingness to experiment, test and evaluate methods and curricula of religious education was unprecedented. Her attention to detail is reflected in the observational records kept by the teaching staff throughout the years she was principal of the Union School of Religion. Fahs's *Exploring Religion With Eight-Year-Olds* (1930), written with Helen Firman Sweet, is a detailed class record of a year's worth of Sunday school lessons. Her work in testing and evaluating methods and texts for the classroom are hallmarks of her legacy.

At the heart of Fahs's approach to religious education were the children's deepest questions about the mystery at the centre of all life. For her, freedom and growth as the values behind the transformation effected by education were gifts of the Creator freely offered to all humans. The full use of these gifts, which demands inquiry and thus education, is the aim of all education. Growth, learning and transformation are its fruits.

Considering education as the practice of human freedom, Fahs understood that it led to the 'abundant life.' Deeming herself 'a reverent agnostic,' she believed that

children can know enough about God to begin to construct their own philosophies of life—even theologies—that will gradually become the sufficient foundation for a life that flourishes even in tumultuous times. She contended that the imaginations of teachers and students are engaged and heightened in the process of such a transformative education as their experiences deepen and widen through intellectual inquiry. Within the depths of any experience, the religious dimension may be discovered.

Relationships are central to the process of social transformation in education. Fahs believed that as children grow and develop emotionally and intellectually, the number and complexity of their relationships should naturally increase and become more and more inclusive. There is a natural rhythm to Fahs's pedagogy, dictated ultimately by the developing child, but also orchestrated by the engaged, imaginative and professionally trained religious educator who journeys with the child toward Creative Mystery. Life-long religious education leads the human person to live as a free and responsible member of 'a world brotherhood'—or global family—able to cope realistically with all problems and challenges this will naturally entail.

Fahs also understood religious education as life formation that begins with the very earliest experiences of the child and continues in many forms in and outside of the church school setting. She believed that education should offer learners experiences that lead them to understand, value and exercise personal and responsible freedom in life. Religious education should give children the courage to welcome life and trust in its potential goodness even in the face of suffering and tragedy. The classroom was, for Fahs, a microcosm of democratic life.

Fahs held that religious education led to social transformation when the teaching-learning process fostered connections between learner, teacher and the world. The engaged teacher is imaginative in constructing learning experiences and is sensitive to the developmental stages of the learners. Fahs acknowledged a natural rhythm to teaching and learning—a slow, gradual response in which wonder and awe continually generate new questions and activities for the discovery of answers that will, in turn, lead the learner toward greater wonder and deeper questioning (Nolan, 2004).

Religious and spiritual growth, according to Fahs, occurred naturally as a result of this creative way of doing religious education. She noted that this form of ministry had the potential to bring about such transformations in the child as: (1) Learning to think 'on one's own' about the things that matter most in life; (2) Forming the habit of weighing fairly and objectively others' interests and needs along with one's own; (3) Learning to make choices on the basis of what will bring to all the human beings concerned greater happiness and richness of life; (4) Increasingly appreciating beauty in nature, music, art, and people; (5) Interpreting the ever-new experiences of life in terms of opportunities for co-operation with God in building a better world (Bridgman & Fahs, 1925, p. 106). Observing, recording and evaluating such transformations in student attitudes and behaviors was a unique contribution to the field made by Fahs and her associates in experimental religious education.

While Fahs's philosophy of religious education was grounded in her liberal theology, it was also rooted in her deep reverence for Christian missions and

the truths inherent in other world religions. Daniel R. Chandler wrote in a commemorative article for the journal, *Religious Education*:

Fahs's educational philosophy stemmed from her religious experience. Stressing a pertinent and purposeful religious education that nurtures modern children, she rejected emphatically the outdated, archaic, detrimental techniques that characterise authoritarianism and evangelism. Clearly she demonstrated an essential consistency between her religious philosophy and her educational methodology. (1989, pp. 546–547)

Furthermore, her educational philosophy was shaped by her personal experiences with children, her own and others. Chandler addressed this facet of her thought: 'Growing through her personal experiences, Fahs struggled to satisfy her children's physical and religious needs. The problems she encountered as a mother nurtured her religious and educational philosophy' (1989, p. 540). Her children were her teachers and she viewed those years of family life as an internship that influenced and shaped her career as a religious educator of youth.

Children continued to hold fascination for Fahs who was still teaching and supervising in the school of religion at Riverside Church when she was fifty-six years old. Here she developed an experimental class for nine and ten-year olds, spending long hours on research and record keeping. She wrote, 'I am struggling to see if these children can be stimulated to appreciate some unseen values...which make religion necessary' (Hunter, 1966, p. 210). Though the class was not entirely successful in terms of all Fahs's goals, the experience validated her creative approach to the religious education of children.

The New Beacon Series: The Culmination of A Life's Work

In 1937, at the age of sixty-one, Sophia Lyon Fahs was invited to fill the position of Editor of Children's Materials for the Unitarian Church of the United States (Hunter, 1966b, p. 197). She brought to Unitarian religious education a lifetime of experience in the religious education of children. The curriculum she edited over the ensuing years was nondenominational in nature and was in large part personally overseen or written by Fahs herself. The series was a culmination of her life's work, weaving together liberal theology, progressive educational philosophy, science and nature, psychology and child development theory, mysticism and historical biblical criticism. The success of *The New Beacon Series*, edited by Sophia Lyon Fahs from 1937 to 1964, was due at least in part to the cohesiveness of the theology and philosophy of religious education underpinning it. As Randolph Crump Miller observed,

'Theology...must be the presupposition of any curriculum.... [This] means that the educators must become theologians, and the theologians must become educators, and the writers of lesson materials must be grounded thoroughly in both educational theory and theological method. (1955, pp. 10–11)

Concurring with Miller, David Parke wrote in the conclusion of his dissertation that *The New Beacon Series* was successful for several reasons including the fact that (1) a consistent, articulate, and appropriate philosophy of education underlay the series; (2) the books in the series were written for children of particular ages, and were use-tested with children's classes prior to publication in order to insure their interest and relevance; (3) a fine balance was worked out between life-situation teaching employed with younger children, and didactic teaching—employed with children of seven years and older who were capable of identifying with persons beyond their own peer group (1965, p. 377).

The New Beacon Series was distinctly different from the uniform, pamphlet-style, graded lessons of other denominational Sunday schools. The series consisted of books that were to be read by or with children, each with an accompanying teacher's guide. Subject matter included nature, child growth, family life, world religions, lives of religious founders, creation and science. Older children began their study of Jesus and the Bible around the age of ten. At age thirteen, students might read such titles as *The Church Across the Street* (Manwell & Fahs, 1947), *Questions That Matter Most—Asked By the World's Religions* (Ross & Hills, 1954), and *War's Unconquered Children Speak* (Cobb, 1953).

Speaking of her approach to religious education, Parke cites Angus MacLean addressing Fahs: 'I think you are the most important thing that ever happened to liberal religion, for you gave a bony structure to its uncertain body-form and support as well as muscle for strength and mobility in pursuit of purpose. You gave it its one great corporate expression' (1965, p. 377). This corporate expression was the result of a lifetime's work of harmonising and weaving together liberal theology, progressive educational philosophy and practice, historical biblical criticism and the latest findings of the human and physical sciences. Few religious educators have developed both theory and practice to such an extent. Her energy to do so was based on her conviction that a 'new reformation' was afoot in religion—one that would prove to be of even greater import than the first. In Parke's view, 'whereas [William Ellery] Channing only announced a revolution, Mrs. Fahs effected one' (1965, p. 381).

Throughout her long years of work and writing, Fahs reiterated the fact that she realised what she was proposing was 'new.' She surmised:

A religious reformation has begun...The reformation is now only in its beginning. It cannot be accomplished hurriedly. In fact, if man ceases to reform his religions in light of his advancing knowledge, they will become sterile. Not only do we as adults need to enlist in this reformation, but we need to prepare our children to carry on after us. (Fahs, 1960, pp. 14–15)

Many of Fahs's proposals remained untested outside of experimental and liberal church schools. Neo-orthodox influences in religious education overshadowed and eventually brought to a halt any possibility of her methods being wholly adopted by mainline church schools. This is not to imply that her work has been discarded. Indeed, much of it laid fertile ground for further development in the field of religious

education. Edith Hunter indicated that Fahs was at least partially responsible for influencing church schools in integrating developmental theories, using bound texts rather than leaflets, cooperating with parents, incorporating a variety of creative activities and lessening Bible materials for the very youngest children (1956, p. 327).

The Unitarian Universalist Church continues to laud Fahs as one who revolutionised liberal religious education. Reverend Don Southworth of Atlanta Georgia called her 'our Religious Education saint' (2002). Another Unitarian Universalist pastor proclaimed:

A great deal of credit for the development of the discovery method belongs to Sophia Lyon Fahs, who edited the New Beacon Series of children's books for the American Unitarian Association in the 1930s and '40s. In 1959, at the age of 82, she was ordained into the Unitarian ministry, and although she died in 1978, her influence still lives on. We don't recognise saints in our denomination, but if we did Sophia Fahs would be a prime candidate. Among religious educators she's still remembered fondly as 'Saint Sophia'. (Thompson, 2001)

Many Unitarian Universalist curricula and philosophies of religious education continue to be based on Fahs's thought, and liberal seminarians continue to study her work. Denominational handbooks of religious education in many UU churches refer to the continuing influence of Fahs's ideas in their contemporary programs. One such handbook states, 'To accomplish [our mission], we utilise the research and teachings of the Unitarian Universalist religious educator, Sophia Lyon Fahs, and the Unitarian Universalist Association.' The North Shore Unitarian Church handbook calls her ideas 'prescient' and identifies the fourth and fifth grade curriculum as employing Fahs's methods. The same handbook states, 'Fahs...revolutionised the world of religious education with her fervent belief' and 'the observations of Fahs and [James] Fowler are the grounding of our philosophy of religious education.' While only two of her books for children remain in publication, her influence, particularly in Unitarian Universalist religious education, is widely acknowledged.

The Legacy of Sophia Lyon Fahs

In any retrieval of historical thought, there are elements unearthed that are no longer pertinent. This is true in Fahs's case in and in the whole of the liberal response to modernity. In many ways, though reluctant to give into neo-orthodox critiques of liberalism, Fahs transcended the classical liberal progressive ideas of many of her contemporaries. While much of her thought resonates with contemporary concerns in the field, to call her work visionary is to join a chorus of many voices who have addressed her work in the years since her death in 1978.

There is much in the theology and philosophy of religious education of Sophia Lyon Fahs to be reclaimed by subsequent generations. The effects and potentialities

of her work are greater than those realised in her lifetime. The legacy of her work remains, and her remarkable foresight concerning many prominent contemporary issues should be noted. By keeping her finger on the pulse of her times and by a deep and conscientious examination of her own experiences in education as well as those of others she was able to see with remarkable clarity what was ahead for the profession.

Fahs has relevance for today that other progressive liberals do not. This may be attributed to feminist retrievals of the historical place of women in education. Another contributing factor is the fact that Fahs left a body of work that is both theoretical and practical in scope. Providing added pertinence to Fahs's work today is her openness to other religions and the insistence on presenting a particular religion within the context of all humanity's religions. Her work is of special interest today because of her awareness that she stood on the threshold of something new in religious education that could better prepare children for the challenges of the future.

Fahs's thought anticipates that aspect of cultural postmodernity that embraces diversity and plurality. In fact her theology grew more and more universal over the years to the point of becoming, in the opinion of some who knew her, non-sectarian. She strenuously worked to include a comparative element in all the curricular materials she edited. She anticipated that the world of the future would demand understanding, tolerance and harmony among all religions. A resurgence of interest in the romantic and the mystical is characteristic of both the postmodern era and of Fahs's thought. Fahs staunchly addressed the dangers of absolutism and overriding meta-narratives such as the one she called 'The Old Story of Salvation.' Additionally, as it has been noted, Fahs advocated a reconstructive approach to those religious symbols and expressions that had been rendered outdated by new discoveries across the disciplines. These characteristics of her thought support the case for her continued relevance for today's postmodern world. While far from being exhaustive, the next section identifies seven visionary aspects of Fahs's thought.

An Enduring Vision for Religious Education

Sophia Lyon Fahs has been the subject of a number of doctoral dissertations and the focus of study by such noted religious educators as Mary Boys and M. Susan Harlow. Her contributions to the field are numerous and cannot be adequately addressed in a single chapter. Her biographer, Edith Hunter, modestly admitted that Fahs's work contributed to such developments in religious education as classroom experimentation with curricula prior to publication, development of teacher's guides, use of evaluation techniques, and recognition of and training for religious educators (Parke, 1965). Certainly, her natural theology and belief in the Bible as one sacred text among many singled her out from other Protestant educators of the day. Her concern over the point at which to begin Bible study with children was shared by many, though she stood courageously for a delay until the ages of eight or nine.

Sophia Lyon Fahs sensed an imminent danger of the church losing its young members due to conflicting methodologies used in religious education and science.

She wrote extensively on the need to harmonise the findings and processes of the sciences with religious teachings. As early as 1928, in a paper she delivered to the Religious Education Association, Fahs observed:

The deductive process in religion has been clashing with the inductive process in science. This fundamental conflict between the two types of processes, and the efforts of religion to turn about face and to travel with science are fraught with so great significance for religious education and for religion itself, that if we could visualise what it is that is coming to be, we would speak as it were with tongues of fire. (Fahs, 1928, p. 332)

The conflict of processes in science and religion leads to both intellectual and emotional difficulties for the child attempting to harmonise what is being taught at school with what is being taught by the church. Fahs believed that 'religion, to be wholesome, needs to be a fitting over-belief' (Fahs, 1942, p. 247). Youth, in their advanced level of scientific study, need teachers of religion who are well qualified to assist them in dealing with such conflicts.

Delivering The Rufus Jones Lecture in 1960, Fahs spoke of foreseeing 'young people rejecting religion in increasing numbers' and 'the moral foundations of our society crumbling' if religions are not reformed 'in light of advancing knowledge' (Fahs, 1960, p. 15). Fahs believed adults should be honest in their dealings with youth, avoiding pat answers and promoting authentic dialogue between science and religion. Claims of having all the answers and passing on religious ideas no longer held as true could be detrimental to the future of the church. Children were important members of the church and, to Fahs, the most important. She cautioned: 'We said: 'They will outgrow their childish faith. We shall let them think for themselves as soon as they are old enough to do so.' But we were too late. They thought the old religion was all we knew. Many were not interested' (Fahs, 1945, p. 8). The necessary antidote was a new type of church school, one that nurtured its young and placed their education at the very centre of church mission.

Connected to this concern for harmonising science and religion, Sophia Lyon Fahs also foresaw problems arising from an outmoded biblical cosmology and sought to reconstruct her own theology on the basis of the latest scientific views on the nature of the universe. She devoted an entire chapter in her treatise on philosophy of religious education to the topic. She observed: 'To build the beginnings of faith in God on a conception of the universe that our generation no longer regards as true is to prepare the way for a loss of respect for the Bible; and what is worse, to court a cynical atheism when the child is old enough to learn for himself' (Fahs, 1952, p. 106).

The topic is later treated by Unitarian minister, Shirley Ranck, who noted three aspects of biblical cosmology that seemed especially troublesome to Fahs. Those were: (1) the idea that creation was completed in the past; (2) the idea that there exists a dualism between the natural and the spiritual worlds that clearly elevated the latter over the former; and (3) the idea that the cosmos is controlled by a God who 'uses the forces of nature as a means of moral discipline' (Ranck, 1990,

pp. 34–35). Fahs, Ranck aptly noted, saw these three outmoded beliefs as the root of much of what ails the modern world. Fahs believed humankind was called to cooperation with the universe, not domination. An outdated cosmology led to a fragmented world-view. Ranck summarised Fahs's thought when she wrote: 'Fahs suggested that the divisive authoritarian structures that pervade our society and dominate our thinking are rooted in the biblical cosmology and morality' (Ranck, 1976, p. 605).

A third foresight was Fahs's call to church leaders and religious educators to be courageous and adventurous in the work of reconstructing traditional religious symbols, expressions and myths for modern times. 'The way of searching for new and truer insights...is a way that calls for a courageous, creative adventure, involving much sharing of knowledge and experience' (Fahs, 1955, p. 135). 'There is fear lest, in improving the structure, the foundations may be blasted. Emotional tensions run high.... Everyone, in a measure, must be a theologian' (Fahs, 1952, p. 96).

That religious organisations were so highly resistant to change was due to the emotional nature of religion itself. Fahs observed:

While we may easily discard our fathers' quill pens, their gay waistcoats and their stage coaches, we cling tenaciously to their religious faith.... We can with more difficulty, change our family patterns, our economic and social organisation, and our racial attitudes; but to change our religious beliefs touches us at the deepest levels of life and demands profound adjustments, often extremely painful to make. (Fahs, 1952, p. 5)

The religiously minded adult is responsible to the future generation. Fahs hoped that religious educators would come forth from the new generation and that they would have the courage necessary to directly face the controversies between continuity and change in the church.

A fourth dimension of Fahs's theology and a timely topic for today's religious education is religious pluralism. Fahs believed that from the youngest years and throughout life, the study of the religions of humankind not only enhanced the understanding of one's own religion but also led to a greater sense of connectedness among people of all religions. The world community, she felt, must seek to understand and accept various religious traditions as validation of humankind's common search for the divine in diverse, but life-enhancing ways. Fahs aptly noted:

Our common living room is now the whole earth. Whether we will or not, our neighbors are on the other side of the globe as well as next door. In the light of this spaciousness in our exchanges, we find it unseemly to imagine ourselves superior. The realities of our shortcomings are all too easily observed by other nations and groups. Nor can we arrogate to ourselves an exclusive religious revelation. The Scriptures of other religions are easily accessible to every scholar. Any one group today that tries to dominate the whole world by its

ideology or by military might, or by force of any kind, will eventually win only the hatred of those who are put under its power. (1952, p. 150)

Not only does such a broadening of perspective open the possibility for world community, it deepens the appreciation of one's own religious tradition and beliefs. In a chapter entitled, 'What Shall Children Study?' Fahs wrote:

Modern youth growing up in our modern world needs to find much more understanding of the world's religious history than has been allowed to any previous generation.... Indeed, the values in one's own religious heritage can never be understood or fairly appraised until one is able to compare his own with others. (1952, p. 184)

A fifth and profoundly prophetic insight of Sophia Lyon Fahs concerned the need for a holistic creation theology. Fahs's deep respect and love for the natural world is reflective of her belief in God's immanence and the revelatory capacity of the universe. The study and appreciation of nature were emphasised in religious education curricula written and edited by Fahs. In *A New Ministry to Children* she poetically wrote of the complex relationship between humanity and the universe:

The Universe has been struggling through a long evolution. We are the fruits of her millions of years of labor. Our flesh is the evolved dust of the stars. Our very life is dependent upon the continuing life and death of other creatures. Without the common green world of grasses and grains we should quickly perish. Our indebtedness is a heritage that links us to all living and nonliving things from the beginning of time. The Living Universe does not ask us to accept things as they are. She challenges us to join in creating better things. She asks us to help her improve. In our pride of human superiority, we have sometimes been disdainful of the values in things of a so-called lower order. We have talked of subduing the forces of nature to serve our ends. The Living Universe calls us to understand, to appreciate, to co-operate—rather than to conquer. An exclusively human ethic is narrow. (Fahs, 1945, p. 7)

To imagine that creation was complete and that the world was for the explicit use of humanity was inconceivable to Fahs. Nature was a pervasive and essential aspect of her curricular materials for children. God's wonders and the mysteries of life and death were to be learned through a child's experiences with the created world.

Fahs gave voice to another cause close to her heart in a sermon she delivered at her own ordination. This concern reverberated through the years in her teaching and writing, most profoundly in her last article for *Religious Education*, written when she was ninety-five years old. The central subject of concern for Fahs was the need to improve the quality of religious education for the young. The field of religious education, she believed, must seek the brightest and best of young teachers and professionally prepare them, and seminarians as well, to nurture the

religious sensibilities of children. Fahs believed 'that all theological seminaries and institutions for the development of religious leadership must give more attention to children.' She continued:

I believe that during the past as well as today Christian churches have been neglecting the children, even though Sunday Schools have been growing in size and equipment; and few theological seminaries give the education of the ministers to children their whole-hearted interest and respect...At present it takes a very strong purpose and a willingness to sacrifice prestige for a man or a woman to enter the field of the religious education of the young. Ministers in preparation should be helped to feel more keenly the critical *importance* of the children. (Fahs, 1971, p. 458)

Fahs understood the task of her vocation as 'reconstructing the processes and the content of the religious education of children in light of mankind's growing understandings' (1971, p. 458). She proposed that the study of elementary religious education be a part of all liberal churches' seminary programs. The religious education of children is today a vital aspect of Unitarian Universalist congregations. Fahs's voice has not faded away.

One final example of Fahs's work that serves as a model for today lies in the very way she chose to live out her life and career as a woman of confidence in a field occupied predominately by men. It never seemed to concern her that she was often the sole woman in a professional gathering. She conducted herself with certainty and assurance as an expert in the field, regardless of the scarcity of women. Before she married she hoped that she might do some great work for God. While she thoroughly loved the challenges of raising her children ('The children were my teachers.') she openly confessed her career ambitions to her husband. At times the demands of home life kept her from writing as much as she would like. Fahs's youngest daughter Lois Fahs Timmins recalled:

My mother was an early feminist and wrote an article on Women's Suffrage before I was born.... Our household chores were not assigned according to sex, but according to our interests and capabilities. Mother fought all her life for equal rights for women. She complained that at Union Theological Seminary the women instructors were paid less than the men instructors, and was almost fired for her protest. Our family deity was not sex-linked.... Today, I have little enthusiasm for the arguments as to whether God is male or female. (Timmins, n.d., p. 1)

Fahs would not have identified herself as a feminist nor did she become involved in specifically feminist causes or organisations. While she was determined to raise a family and to have a professional career, Fahs was also 'aware of being part of the 'new Age of Women' and she understood her right to a higher education and a career' (Ranck, 1990, p. 29). Hunter quotes a letter Sophia wrote to her future husband:

I am too ambitious to serve the women of some heathen land, to be a nonentity for the direct work of foreign missions that some wives seem to be. I am too ambitious to give my life in direct foreign missionary work, to give twenty years of the strength of my life in service at home as my mother has done. Such lives count a great deal, but I long for the other. (1966b, p. 42)

In 'A Feminist Look at the Theology of Sophia Lyon Fahs' (1990), Shirley Ranck culled out many feminist tendencies in Fahs's thought. Specifically, Ranck noted that at an early point, Fahs connected patriarchal scripture with an exclusively masculine image of God. Perhaps Ranck was referring to the following passage from Fahs's *The Old Story of Salvation*:

The biblical records all came out of a type of culture that was autocratic and patriarchal. The father in the household, the chieftain of the tribe, and the head of the nation—all ruled in their respective circles with an iron hand. Even the father expected absolute obedience from his children, and had to the power of life and death over them. It would have been unthinkable in those times for men in such a culture to think of God in any other way than as lawgiver and judge. It is indeed only very recently that this general conception of relationships in the home and in the nation has been questioned or much changed. Even now the authoritarian pattern in home, society and government is far more prevalent than the more flexible, mutually-respecting pattern of democratic relationships. (Fahs, 1955, p. 135)

Sophia Lyon Fahs is remembered today as one of the leading women pioneers in the field of religious education. Though her focus was on the religious education of children and not on the various social movements of her day, Fahs was not unaware of her impact as a woman on the field. At her ordination ceremony, Fahs remarked:

Even though I am glad that the feminist element in this ordination has not been primary, I find an exhilaration tonight in being a woman and in being able therefore to act as a kind of representative of all the other women who are now ministering faithfully week by week in our liberal churches. (Fahs, 1959)

According to M. Susan Harlow, 'her thinking, writing, teaching, and resource editing all provide threads that contribute to a constructive feminist religious education' (Harlow, 1997, p. 23).

Conclusion

For Sophia Lyon Fahs, painful dialogue and imponderable questions were lures into the realm of growth, learning, religious maturity and a life well lived. Moreover, the search for the meaning and mystery of the Divine working in the world was in and of itself a religious experience. Her theology is a legacy to her openness to freedom and dynamism in the processes of human growth and learning. Fahs's thought

makes an easy transition into the revisionist era because of, what had become for her, a natural and ongoing process of critical reconstruction.

Sophia Lyon Fahs's ability to read the signs of her times and to re-examine and revise outmoded theological understandings are hallmarks of her legacy. Her courage and willingness to venture into new realms of experimental methods colored the development of her theology and philosophy of religious education. Ministers, religious educators, theologians, teachers and parents will continue to benefit from reading her work. To recall that the past is always a part of the present and that tomorrow's children are a part of yesterday's heritage should inspire religious leaders to critically examine both *what* the children of today are learning and *how* they are learning it. Fahs knew that

this reformation, if it is not to be muffed or thwarted, is going to demand degrees of courage, wisdom, insight and creatively original thinking beyond anything that any of us can imagine today.... Over and over again we need to bring children into our midst, as did Jesus for his disciples, not only for their sake but for ours as well.... Such changes cannot be brought about successfully without perceptive and knowledgeable leadership...developed in planned centres for observation, experimentation and evaluation and internship learning in direct experiences. (Fahs, 1971, p. 458)

In the years before her retirement Sophia Lyon Fahs's efforts were directed toward this reformation. She hoped liberal churches, colleges and seminaries would be establish such centres for the development of leadership in religious education. This was the vision of Sophia Lyon Fahs: that religious education might begin to transform the world, one individual at a time, toward the dream of an international and interracial community of good will. She fully realised the magnitude of the enterprise and that it would 'take more than angels.' She also knew it begins simply, by putting a child in our midst.

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THE EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCES OF SPIRITUALITY IN THE FORMATION OF FAITH

Joyce Bellous

McMaster Divinity College, McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario

Introduction

I will explore conceptual relationships among the terms faith, spirituality and education to show how faith operates in human lives. I will argue that exercising faith is an existential necessity, that the spiritual is broader than the existential since the former term includes a concept for God, whether or not it is favorable, that the spiritual aims to balance integration and individuation, and that understanding faith spiritually enhances relational consciousness so that we are more able to unify the needs to individualise as well as to integrate ourselves within our general environment.

Faith as an Existential Necessity

Every human being requires an education in faith. Faith must grow up if people want to be well. Two aspects of the term influence education: the noun faith and the verb to believe. The noun and its adjective are expressed in the following sentences: The faith of her parents is Christianity. She is a faithful person. The second aspect is conveyed in the sentence: He believes in God. The second sense is an activity: it is an exercise of faith. Faith as noun or adjective is the confidence, reliance or conviction we place in someone or something. In its exercise, faith becomes an attitude of the heart, i.e., a disposition. People who exercise faith can be counted on to act in certain ways since placing confidence in a person or things alters thought and action with respect to that person or things and to the world in general. As a result, exercising faith is as changeful as is physical exercise.

Faith refers to content and a way of life. As content, faith is intellectual assent, which implies that a person holds consciously chosen statements about the world.

These statements, or deep assumptions (Kegan & Lehey, 2001), may be any of the following:

- Look out for your self! No one else will do it for you.
- No one else can tell me what to do.
- I am a person of hope.
- I must fight to be heard!
- No one will ever hurt me like that again.
- I must continually act in order to have value.

In general, those who give verbal assent to deep assumptions act accordingly to implications of the statements they prize. I say generally because a dynamic of faith's exercise is caught in the relationship between what people say they affirm and what they actually rely on. Affirmation implies intentionality. Yet there may be deep cleavages between what we say and what we count on when the going gets tough. Observing our own faithfulness (and its failures) means noticing congruity between what is said and what is done, continuity more elusive than we like to admit, but which constitutes the spiritual work of growing up. Putting faith in deep assumptions consciously and participating in their revision is the spiritual work of growing up.

Every human being has a capacity for doing spiritual work and thereby exercises faith. There is an agent—the person that exercises faith. There is the relation between the agent and the object. Suppose a young child exercises faith in her mother. As they go for a walk, they come to a playground. The little girl indicates that she wants to play on the slide. She climbs up the steps. As she sits at the top, her mother stands at the bottom of the slide. The mother looks steadily at her daughter and says she will catch her little girl. The child fixes her gaze on her mother's face. The little girl glances down the slide and is afraid but looks back to the familiar face and pushes away from her safe resting spot, keeping her eyes on her mother. Her mother catches her. The relation between mother and child is carried through their mutual gaze and expressed in their shared joy at success. Faith addresses fear. Faith is the opposite of giving in to fear. Faith tries things out, and failing or succeeding, goes on trying. While it may be possible to avoid slides in a playground, every human being learns to exercise faith. We put faith in our trust or in our mistrust of other people. This girl is likely to put faith in trusting others.

We learn about faith as infants. Consider an infant who plays a game of peek-a-boo with his father. The father, the game and the baby constitute an activity in which the infant is learning that his father exists even though the baby can no longer see him. As they play the game the baby learns to have faith in things unseen. Faith is active when we cannot make use of our five senses. Faith is the consequence of experimenting with trust. We put faith in something or someone with the result that we acquire certain beliefs about the world. If conditions are favorable, beliefs form about the world encouraging us to exercise trust rather than succumbing to fear and refusing to trust in anything that we cannot see, smell, hear, taste or touch.

People are compelled to put faith somewhere. Some put faith in a story that life will always disappoint them. Some even put faith entirely in themselves, or more accurately, in a snapshot – an image of themselves they make into an idol. But we all inevitably exercise faith. We have faith that the sun will come up tomorrow and that the seas will stay in place. We put faith in the roof our heads and that the weather will bring sun and rain to make the fields produce food. We put faith in other people. If we did not put faith in ordinary things (existential necessities) we would not have the energy to go on living. People who cannot put faith in the predictability and orderliness of the world are unwell. They become neurotic or psychotic. They are overwhelmed by anxiety and crushed by the demands of living. Faith speaks to anxiety. Faith is built into reality and affirms the wisdom of putting faith in the predictable length of days and seasons, in rain falling to water the earth and in the sun shining to warm it.

Faith is an attitude that integrates the experience of a whole person – an entire self. In its integrative role, faith influences action due to the way it organises the perception of experience. Integration is an ambiguous term. It refers to integrity in one's life: a capacity to weave together threads of experience into a whole pattern, evidenced in continuity between faith's content and its exercise, organised into a story that makes sense and integrates experience. Faith

does not create new things but it adds a new dimension to the basic realities of life. Faith brings our fragmented personality into a meaningful whole and unifies our divided self. It is the source of inspiration for a searching mind, the basis for a creative community and a constant incentive for an on-going renewal of life (Nowen, 1969, p. 19).

To organise reality meaningfully, story shapes perspective. Narratives are communally grounded and personally appropriated—as stories we tell our selves and others about the world.

In addition, faith narratives provide the courage to go on living; they convey Spinoza's idea of *conatus*, i.e., they provide the 'energy' of a self to persist in being what it is. *Conatus* is energy exercised to resist damage accrued in life, to restore our selves when injured and to protect our selves when threatened. As energy, *conatus* encourages people to stand apart from their surroundings, to understand and take charge of their condition (Scruton, 1998, p. 24). Faith is energy that permits individuation, i.e., the initiative to chart new territory in a way of being that typifies one's environment.

An environment is the complex, cumulative effects of social interaction that leave an impression in a dominant ethos or way of being. Environments are specific because they alter over time and are unique to a given place. The tone of an environment has particular relevance to learning how to integrate ourselves appropriately and perceiving our freedom to individuate our selves meaningfully. Integration implies weaving one's self into the fabric of a way of life. Both activities of integration and individuation are essential to faith. They balance one another when faith goes well.

Under favorable conditions, faith is expressed in loyalty to a tradition that is consciously chosen as a way of life—whether secular or religious. As a way of life, faith is fidelity: it is holding fast to one's integrity and keeping one's word, as belief put to use. Faith's exercise implies a kind of attentiveness: we observe ourselves acting congruently with what we claim to believe. Faith as feeling is a way of loving the world. It is an attitude that opposes itself to fear and is forward-looking; mature faith makes peace with uncertainty as it gains a comfortably certain grip on the picture of the world a person holds.

Another dimension of faith is specifically religious. Faith is a comfortable grip on God. Faith holds sure in God, as confident reliance on God's own Self. From Christian perspectives, faith is not superstitious but rests on Christ's 'once-for-all' sacrifice on the cross at Calvary. It is based on a belief that the faithful are related to God *via* historical events of Christ's life, death and resurrection. Faith is grounded on God's initiative from start to finish. Faith continues to have vitality due to the mythological reality of the Living Christ who intercedes for us in heaven (Armstrong, 2005, pp. 106–107). Faith as holding sure in God opens the possibility for enjoying the resources of God's grace: forgiveness and a future. A response to God's generosity expresses itself in worship, integrity and service, enjoys God-infused community, and offers itself to those who suffer the realities of ordinary living. As such, it is a new way of hearing and seeing the world and our selves in it. People see through eyes and hear through ears of faith, or else they perceive experience through a veil of despair.

The primary assumption, then, is that every human being exercises faith. Faith cuts across secular and religious worldviews. If human beings want to be well, they are compelled to make sense of life. Faith fills in gaps in our experience between what we are able to touch, taste, see, hear or smell and realities that we cannot perceive or empirically test. Faith attends to depths that cannot be plumbed with a measuring stick. Faith organises connections between what can be and what cannot be seen. This feature of faith is as true for scientists who study the atom as it is for those who trust an invisible God. Faith refers to a reality beyond mere seeing—a subject on which good science can only pay its humble respects.

In summary, believing is an outcome of faith: it is the action of faith—it is the energy and the narrative that influence daily life. An essential human task is to learn to use faith in the right way, so people can enjoy well-being, whether or not they put their faith in God.

The Spiritual is More Than the Existential

Reflecting on faith is an existential task. It is also educational work since all learning is organising experience. I suggest that spiritual is a larger term than existential since it all addresses human needs the latter does not; it grounds integration, permits individuation, welcomes the possibility of speaking openly about spiritual experience, and acknowledges God concepts along with self concepts in the formation of identity and faith. Spirituality is relational, personal and transcendent.

Despite its vital role in human flourishing, spirituality is silenced in material culture; materialism overwhelms the spiritual. While it is clear that spirituality is opposed to materialism, it is also distinguished from existentialism, even though I assert that faith is an existential necessity. Exercising faith is an existential necessity, but spirituality is more than existentialism.

While existentialism is diverse, it was a universal fad in the 1940s, made popular in Jean-Paul Sartre's insistence that 'man [sic] is condemned to be free' (Miller, 1993, p. 43). Sartre identified in Christian and atheistic forms, a core assumption: existence precedes essence (Sartre, 1968, p. 26). Existence refers to an actuality of being, expressed in choice and responsibility; essence refers to a set of defining characteristics represented, for example, by human nature (p. 26). Existentialism rejects the totalising influence of philosophies that put essence before existence, and in so doing, sum up reality in formal arrangements (Pickstock, 1998, pp. 44 ff.), particular people as members of a genus or instances of universal laws (Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2000, p. 265).

For Sartre, absolute truth consisted in 'one's immediate sense of one's self' (Sartre, 1998, p. 44). Like Kant, he formulated his own version of the Golden Rule: 'Everything happens to every man as though the whole human race had its eyes fixed upon what he is doing and regulated his conduct accordingly' (Miller, p. 43). Man is solitary and responsible; he is an unbearable burden to himself and other people, as Sartre demonstrated in his play, *No Exit*, which he concluded by asserting that 'Hell is other people' (Sartre, 1949, p. 47). Transcendence, for Sartre, was possible, but strictly focused: man is the heart and centre of his own transcendence which means that man is self-surpassing (1968, p. 55). To relate his existentialism with my position thus far, Sartre privileged individuation over integration: to be, is to be one's own. Authentic life is solitary. By contrast, spirituality aims to marry individuation and integration, without losing the identity of either.

In emphasising individuation, existentialism failed to take seriously the social power that infuses all human relationships. Michel Foucault countered Sartre's radical assertion of human transcendence and responsibility by revealing the force inherent in 'the order of things'. Foucault revealed social power which exerts an almost irresistible force, compelling individuals to remain in place (to be self-controlled rather than self-surpassing), not simply because of other people, but because the force of one's own subjectivity, ever so subtly, operates eventually to enforce social power over our selves (Foucault, 1979).

If Sartre privileged individuation, Foucault appears to render it as an impossibility – almost. Spirituality, in contrast, boldly aims to link individuation and integration. Its research asserts humanity is deeply connected, arguing that spirituality has a biological root, but acknowledging that human connections are fragile and easily damaged. Due to its biological root, long-term survival relies on acknowledging links that make life bearable for everyone. But spirituality is easily humiliated through ridicule and exclusion. While spirituality claims a strong biological ground in human experience, its expression is informed by its context. It is not simply that materialistic cultures stifle spiritual needs and insight; it is

also due to its own ambiguity that spirituality may be hindered in its free and joyful expression (Hay & Nye, 1998, p. 120), depending on its environment, even though it plays a foundational role in human survival. Alister Hardy (1966), as a committed Darwinist, proposed the hypothesis that religious experience (spirituality) evolved through the process of natural selection because it has survival values to the individual (Hay & Nye, 1998). Spirituality is a form of awareness, transcending everyday awareness which is potentially present in all human beings and which has a positive function in enabling individuals to survive in their natural environment. It is also a feeling of absolute dependence which is not simply an emotion, but is something more like a perception. Spirituality emerges at birth as a dimension of human experience because we are born in bodies and are cared for by other bodies. The spiritual is a bridge between one's own and these other bodies; it is an embodied consciousness expressed through our need for others.

As a biological, psychological necessity, the spiritual is a 'space' that opens up between the personal and the material as infants experience the world and its objects from the time they are born. In the space between inner and outer reality, illusions form and meaning is created. This third site is the genesis of the spiritual aspect of human life; a space that is neither the self nor the world but that is influenced by both. It is a mid-point reality between subjective and objective realities. In this space, objects form (objects or concepts that are the building blocks of mental mythologies) as a child experiences the self and the world; these objects are transitional—they are *go between*s, so to speak, that influence ongoing perceptions of everything. This intermediate space is an area of experiencing, 'to which inner reality and external life both contribute (Winnicott, 1971, p. 2), and which, in turn, acts back on one's perception and understanding of outer and inner reality. It is a stronghold created by the 'perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet interrelated' (p. 2). Embodied, emotionally laden concepts (deep assumptions) may shift their shape with changes in experience or be maintained as fortresses against change as they cohere in the faith narratives we hear and tell.

In this intermediate spiritual space, the organisation of experience happens. Spirituality forms illusions but an illusion is not something false. Illusion is not delusion. All art, science and religion depend on illusion for their existence. Illusion is the bedrock of all learning. Illusions are not false so much as idiosyncratic and useful organising principles for ordinary living. Concepts flourish in the intermediate space between the self and world as 'transitional phenomena', transitional objects of perception. They (image, feeling and idea) are the stuff of thinking; they are experience-rich and assumption-laden. These rich, laden concepts influence perception in terms of one's relation to God, other people, the world and the self, for example, in the value we attribute to other people's lives.

In its integrative role, spirituality forms illusion-based identity through the construction of a mental mythology that acquires a quality of being, holistically conceived, made up of insight, values and beliefs that give meaning, direction and purpose to life, including attitudes, emotions and behavioral dispositions that inform and are informed by lived experience. Its cognitive aspect constitutes a framework

of ideals, beliefs and values about the self, others and the world as a whole that informs but does not determine action. People choose to act according to spiritual values. Spirituality is a dimension of identity formation that helps us sense how we are related to more than material realities. Further, human beings experience something in them 'that expresses and carries the continuity of living personhood', a sense of a 'real me' that lies behind the accumulation of events that constitutes each life from beginning to end, an entity that has been called a soul (Polinghorne, 2002, p. 105). This sense of a 'real me' is the source for individuation that marries integration.

In its integrative/individuating role, spirituality compels us to think. Throughout life, we are called upon to test the world and our selves on the basis of mental mythologies formed early: 'the advance of knowledge consists in the steady replacement of our confused and inadequate perceptions with adequate ideas until...all that we think follows from an adequate idea of the essence of God' (Scruton, p. 23). We see through a glass darkly, until we see face to face. Given its challenge to unite individuation with integration, spirituality recognises that the presence of others draws us away from illusion—our inadequate concept of the way things are. Here lies the strength of spiritual experience; here lies its problem: we may privilege our illusions and imagine others inaccurately and fail to let them speak for themselves.

Think for a moment of someone you dislike, someone you are in conflict with at present. What is your thinking about that person like? Maybe you see images of that person humiliated in your presence and you feel satisfied. Suppose you are conscious of a conversation you wish to have with that person. He or she says one thing, you say another, on the conversation goes. In the debate, you score all the points; the other is stupid, evil or whatever you wish. Observe your conversation. While it seems real and is self-gratifying, it is imaginary. You invent yourself and the other: motives, words, admissions and all. These conversations can be addictive: they may replace the joy and struggle of conversing with actual others—including God. The only way to know another is to have a real conversation in which you let others speak for themselves. You need the other to know the other. All else is imagination—with a core of what is real or it would be a delusion rather than an illusion; but it does not tell a whole story of inter-subjective reality.

This example illustrates what we must accomplish in conversation with God if we want our concept to grow up. God must be allowed to speak as Wholly Other—God above our little concepts. But first we must sense the role that imagination plays in forming our thought-life and the way we think about God. Thinking is powerful. Every human being has a concept of God. It is not possible to grow up in the presence of others without developing a concept for God. For educators, it is essential to unravel the concept for God everyone holds in the mind heard. A primary task is to hear these God concepts (not impose our own) and help them grow up. The aim is not to form well-adjusted adults. We are not trying to help people conform to a sinful and sometimes sick world. Faith education is grounded on the spiritual benefits and blessings of believing in God. We want the roots of

faith in the inner life to grow and flourish into healthy relationships with the Church and the world. A mature believer is reconciled with the child within and is both integrated and individuated in the formation of faith. Integration and individuation are accomplished by understanding one's own story about God.

By the time a child is five years old, through 'the busy factory of the child's imagery', which is a matrix of 'facts and fantasies, wishes, hopes, and fears' and through exchanges with parents, the child concocts an image of God (Rizzuto, 1979, p. 7). Over time, images of God may undergo revision, repression, recovery and reconciliation. As adults, we are never finished with ways that God came into being personally when we were children. However, it came into being, and the process of forming an image of God is complex and mysterious, the God a child creates will come back into memory whenever the puzzles of life are staring an adult in the face. We never leave behind the image of God that we acquire in childhood. But, as adults, we may not be able to say what it is. We may not have consciously considered our image of God. The image carries our feelings about God and unites with ideas of God to form the concept we eventually construct.

Children get an image of God through encounters with parents, siblings and significant others. For example, direct encounters between mother and child—eye contact or gaze behavior between them—is a source for the first elaborations of an image of God (Rizzuto, p. 188). The quality and kind of attention an infant gets from her mother influences not only God concepts; it also influences self-concepts. The child needs to be seen as worthy and wonderful. A child gets this information from the mother's looks and touch. The mother's face is like a mirror. The child sees herself in the mirror. If the mirror is wise, the right amount of attention conveys the child's value. Mirroring may go wrong in two ways: too much attention, or too little. If the mirror is unresponsive, the child does not come eventually to look through the mirror to where a real mother dwells. If the mirror exalts the child beyond what is reasonable, mirroring does not reflect a real child. In either case, a child is deprived of an accurate mirroring of self. If mirroring is unsuccessful, God concepts are negatively affected: mirroring produces narcissism (the self is all that matters) or self-negation (the self does not matter at all).

If the child passes through the mirror to encounter the mother (an image that is later safe to critique) the child can organise her obscure notions of God around this image. The spiritual relation, described earlier, is adumbrated through gaze behavior to constitute concepts of God and self in a child's emerging mental mythology. A child needs the other and longs to be found acceptable. If she is found acceptable, she can relax. If the child perceives herself as bad in this process, her problem is a problem of being. What is wrong is not what the child does; but what the child is (Rizzuto, p. 188). If children perceive themselves as bad, in order to please God they have to become an entirely different person. They may feel eternally unacceptable to God.

Like mirroring, psychological reality relies on the transitional space for play and illusion. The illusion we select—science, religion, or something else—reveals our personal history and the transitional space each of us has created between our objects

and our selves. Our illusions provide the space to find 'a resting place' to live in. but God is a unique transitional object (Rizzuto, p. 209). All transitional objects have a life inside and outside the individual as well as a life in the borderlands between the inner and outer life. For example, a teddy bear is a real object in the nursery as well as an object in the inner world of the child. The teddy bear means something specific to a child—it signifies comfort and safety. Children eventually leave teddy on the self as they outgrow their need for it. They move on to other objects that provide security, friends perhaps. Leaving teddy on the shelf is a sign that the child is moving on and growing up.

Unlike a teddy bear, the image of God is permanent. The image of God is not lost nor is God left on the shelf. It is no more possible to lose our image of God than it is to lose our image of father and mother. Instead of losing meaning over time, God gains in meaning. God resurfaces at crucial moments. While it may appear that God is rejected or neglected, and our image may be repressed, God is always potentially available for further acceptance or rejection. The atheist prays as he rushes to the hospital after hearing his wife was in a car accident. A dying woman accepts Jesus as savior and Lord. But Christians do not wait for emergency rooms to re-conceive God. Authentic, thoughtful life examines and builds its concepts intentionally. God concepts must be transformed to carry us to the next level of maturity. While we never lose the image, it is through persistent spiritual work that our concept of God becomes a resting place for our soul's joy. Let us be clear that the image of God within a person is not the God of the Bible. An image is constructed early as a personalised representation for God. Even those who have not read the Bible, have never been to Church, embrace a personal image of God (Hay & Nye, p. 110). There is no such thing as a person without an image of God. God is unique as a transitional object in another sense as well, i.e., in addition to gaining rather than losing meaning over time. God sees the heart: God is the only transitional object that has complete knowledge of the self: one cannot escape the searching eye of God (Rizzuto, p. 10). Educators must ask whether we put stumbling blocks in the way of a developing concept of God. We must concern ourselves with the learner's personal concept of God so that formal ideas presented are free to encourage growth towards faith maturity. The relationship between individual and formal concepts is complex. Hopefully dialogue between them is possible, productive and healthy so that integration and individuation become balanced. A dialogue with God begins at birth and continues to death. The union of images and ideas into a concept of God within the inner life may take one of the four forms. There are those who

- have a God whose existence they do not doubt;
- are wondering whether or not to believe in a God they are not sure exists;
- are amazed, angered, or quietly surprised to see others deeply invested in a God that does not interest them;
- struggle with a demanding, harsh God they would like to get rid of if they were not convinced of his existence and power (Rizzuto, 1979a, p. 91; Rizzuto, 1998b).

We address people with each of these four concepts of God very differently. Our hope is to help them transform personal concepts into vital, scripturally sound God concepts. With effective integration and satisfying individuation, Christian faith is a lasting source of self-respect and soul; nourishment that meets human need from birth to death and enables believers to offer support, love and service from a life *filled to the measure of all the fullness of God*.

In summary, the spiritual excels the existential as a way of expounding human experience because existentialism is steeped in isolation and burdened by a dreadful responsibility we have for ourselves and others. Other people are a wearisome presence. By contrast, Christianity assumes human connection and encourages maturity by integrating and individuating each human life. Christians are not alone. They are not afraid of other people, but fear Satan. (Matt 10:28). They know that 'hell is not other people', hell would be the absence of God – a possibility not easily put in words.

Knowing God, Loving Others: Relational Consciousness¹

If we take as our premise that every person has a concept for God, spirituality is an aspect of ordinary human experience, a point supported by brain researchers who suggest the brain is 'hard wired for religion' (Sandra Wittelson, McMaster University, personal communication). Spirituality is relational, personal and transcendent and is best described as relational consciousness (Hay & Nye, 1998). The term 'relational' is not applied in a narrow sense. It is a deep sense of connection out of which arises aesthetic, scientific and religious experience, personal and traditional responses to mystery and Being, as well as mystical and moral insight. Relational consciousness refers to something more than being alert and mentally attentive. It is remarkable awareness of one's own mental activity. This is an extraordinary point that Children and Worldviews Project researchers as well as Rebecca Nye make about young children's experience. In contrast, Robert Kegan (1982), following Piaget, asserts that thinking about one's thinking is possible at the level of formal operations, usually with children past eleven. More work needs to be done.) Spirituality is an apparently objective insight into subjective responses to something that fosters a new dimension of understanding, meaning, and experience. What is required of education is that we permit and encourage partial, idiosyncratic and troublesome aspects of God concepts to grow up in the light of scripture, tradition and a satisfying but challenging learning environment so that people achieve a balance between integration and individuation, between being themselves and being with others.

¹ I am indebted to Rebecca Nye for her term relational consciousness which captures the notion of spirituality as expressed by major thinkers from William James onward, when they speak about religious experience.

In addition, relational consciousness is raised awareness that transcends ordinary, solitary experience. It is raised, i.e., intense and conscious and raised, i.e., it is far-sighted. Raised awareness is

- intense awareness
- a sense of being objectively aware of one's self as subject
- aware of one's awareness, and of reality
- a feeling of objective presence, a perception of... 'something there'
- more deep and more general than any merely psychological sense of reality
- experience as a direct apprehension of that reality.

Objective awareness of one's self as 'subject' is particularly important in developing an ability to perceive the world in relational terms; it is an ability to turn attention inward, toward one's own thinking, a 'mark of the spiritual' (Tekippe, 2003, p. 15) and to turn attention outward, toward God and other people.

Transcendence is felt by those who have religious affiliations as well as those who have none. From a Christian perspective it is more than surpassing oneself. Christians are sure that people cannot find salvation, spiritual or social, in themselves (Mounier, 1952). Transcendence is a developed capacity to be present and available, communicative and alive in a universe in which God had invested everything. To experience transcendence is to oppose all forms of dehumanisation and to refuse to participate in our own insignificance.

Relational consciousness is raised in the sense that people who speak about spiritual matters lift their vision beyond the myopia of individual concern. Their gaze includes more than their own interests. For the non-religious and religious, relational consciousness is a response to life as a whole, becomes systematic reflective, and calls forth loyalty to inner ideals. Spirituality as relational consciousness is natural, relying on processes accessible to every ordinary child, even developmentally challenged children (Hay & Nye, 1998). Spiritual understanding is consciously aware of the stories we tell about our selves, God and other people. We engage in an iterative relation between these stories and formal, scriptural stories conveyed through tradition and communal experience. Spirituality also assumes a dialogical relation between essence and existence, in which we become aware of our own uniqueness in light of common patterns we share with other people, common patterns that make human communication possible.

In summary, spirituality is not individualistic and solitary. The relational aspect of spirituality bridges objective and subjective experience, creating an intermediate 'space' between personal and material worlds, accessible from birth. From the point of view of Christian education, spirituality provides every human being with the opportunity to know the only true God and to know Jesus Christ – the one sent to show us how to be human friends of God. As such, relational consciousness is the capacity to envision heaven while waiting righteously on earth. Educators are called to nurture this potential in the life of every ordinary person.

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FROM ST IGNATIUS TO OBI-WAN KENOBI: AN EVALUATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON SPIRITUALITY FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION

Graham Rossiter

Religious and Moral Education, Australian Catholic University, Sydney

Introduction

Traditionally, the word ‘spirituality’ referred to the spiritual life of Christians—prayer, and spiritual exercises. It was primarily religious both in definition and practice, and it was applied beyond Christianity to religions generally. Gradually, spirituality acquired a cachet beyond its specific ‘religious’ dimension; it has become a catch phrase that sits comfortably as a term that encompasses a certain lifestyle, a personal philosophy or even a way of doing business. A distinction between the spiritual and the religious emerged, and in some cases, a divergence. Religion no longer had a monopoly on the spiritual. This is illustrated in the sample of quotations below:

[Some of the world’s leading psychologists]...have all agreed that the ‘farther reaches’ of the unconscious connect humanity with a wider spiritual environment. This quest for higher states of consciousness has been an enduring theme in...[the] pursuit of spiritual awakening (Fuller, 2001, p. 58).

Using our Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) means stretching the human imagination. It means transforming our consciousness. It means discovering deeper layers of ourselves than we are used to living. It requires us to find some grounding in the self for meaning that transcends the self (Zohar & Marshall, 2000, p. 35).

Sport cannot equal the sacred traditions as a means of cultivating the inner life. But, as this book makes clear, sport does possess its own unique genius for revealing and opening to people the spirit’s ‘gem-like flame’. Although sport is a most secular activity in a highly secularised world, in its ability to provoke wonder, to elicit deep feeling, to grace our lives with glimpses of timeless

beauty and freedom – in these and other ways sport is, though not religion, something religious (Murphy (cover comments) in Cooper, 1998, p. 1).

Thought Field Therapy: The most powerful technique you will ever experience. Learn how to eliminate fear, anxiety, stress, trauma, guilt, anger, phobias, jealousy, procrastination, addictions, lose weight and increase confidence and energy in minutes! (Piccinotti, 2004, p. 40).

Nova is a Perth/Sydney based Australian magazine ‘committed to exploring leading edge ideas, services, practices and products that help foster a more liveable world.’

These excerpts show how spirituality is being used like a new buzz word with reference to education, medicine, business, sports and travel, and by diverse groups from the religious to the New Age. The understandings and definitions of spirituality have been expanding to accommodate these developments. However, the broader and more generic the definition, the more that everything in life seems to become a part of spirituality. This creates problems for those concerned in various ways with an education in spirituality. Of particular interest here is school education, and religious education in particular.

What then are educators to make of all these developments in spirituality? What are the implications for religious education in religious and public schools – especially with regard to the increasing prominence of non-religious spirituality?

While there are no simple solutions to these questions, this chapter proposes one approach that can have constructive educational implications. It suggests that educators need some perspective on the ‘geography’ of contemporary spirituality. They need some framework for interpreting the development and diversification of spirituality and its relationships with religion. They need to ask questions about what sort of spirituality is being offered today. Such questions can in turn inform judgments about the appropriateness or healthiness of different spiritualities on offer. Many of the questions will revolve around the functions of spirituality, and judgments will need to be made in the light of specified values. Examples of some questions are: What is the role of spirituality? How does it relate to religion? Does it substitute for religion? When is spirituality healthy? And when is it promoting psychological immaturity?

The appraisal of spirituality is not just a professional development task for educators. Children and young people need to learn how to explore spiritual offerings through similar challenging questions. It would seem appropriate at this time to promote more discussion in schools about such an important and complex term, which along with the clarifications such a discussion may generate, may stop the term sliding into the realm of clichés and hyperbole, as can be seen with this offering by Christian minister and ‘stealth evangelist’ Rick Warren!

‘I’m not a bureaucrat...I’m a spiritual entrepreneur,’ he maintains. He promises to ‘reduce your stress, focus your energy, simplify your decisions, give meaning to your life and ...prepare you for eternity.’ As the article noted, Warren appeals to the notion of a ‘comforting God who acts like a great therapist in the sky (Baird, 2004, p. 29).

This chapter is intended to help promote efforts to develop a critical, evaluative perspective on spirituality to inform education. This in turn may help foster the development of young people as critical interpreters of the culture, more conscious of the shaping cultural influences on their spiritual development. The chapter sets out to honour the religious heritage to spirituality while addressing the diverse manifestations of spirituality that have arisen from outside organised religion.

Developments in the Meaning of the Word Spirituality: An Evaluative Perspective

Earlier, the word spirituality was used predominantly with a religious connotation. Now it has been appropriated by a wider range of interest groups and a distinction has emerged between the spiritual and the religious, to the extent that some people now describe their spirituality as non-religious or secular. This distinction is also pertinent to the ways in which spirituality is used in discourses that relate in some way to education. This chapter considers different understandings of spirituality in relation to influential cultural and historical factors. From these considerations an evaluative perspective on spirituality is derived for educational purposes, in other words, a scheme for appraising the appropriateness of any particular offering labelled as spirituality.

If you used the word spirituality in 1960, most likely you would be understood as talking about traditional Christian religious practice; also, for example, if you were talking about Catholic spirituality, it would be linked in some way with the spiritual life of religious orders. But now the word has been appropriated by diverse groups as illustrated above. In addition, there is an interest in spirituality in nursing, the social sciences and ecology; it crops up in areas like healing and the media; even in the new physics, there is some interest in a spiritual dimension to cosmology. Part of spirituality's popularity flows naturally from the view that a spiritual dimension is fundamental to human happiness and fulfilment, but it is vague enough in connotation to accommodate a wide range of interests and lifestyles, including those that are religious, non-religious and even anti-religious.

Clarifying the role of school education, and especially religious education, in promoting spirituality in young people necessarily requires a coherent view of what spirituality is as well as an awareness of its ambiguities; a central educational task for students is to explore the questions: 'What is spiritual?' and 'What is religious?'

One might try to define spirituality comprehensively. However, if the definition seeks to accommodate the wide scope of interest, it can include so much of life that everything ends up being part of spirituality, and this is no more helpful to educational planning than a narrow definition.

Another approach begins with the question 'what *sort* of spirituality' do we want to promote in a particular educational context? This is an evaluative process that analyses issues relating to spirituality and takes a value stance on the particular

aspects that are considered to be most important. These aspects of spirituality can then be used as criteria for informing decisions about curriculum content, resources and pedagogy, and about implications for the organisational and community life of the school. The school context, whether it is a religiously sponsored, independent or government school will alter the terms of reference for this process. Nevertheless, these different qualifying conditions can be taken into account when planning an education in spirituality. As we use the term here, an education in spirituality is not a new subject, but a *perspective* that helps with the examination of all of the different ways in which spirituality enters into school education.

In what follows, a limited selection of issues will be considered to generate a set of key evaluative principles with the intention of informing educational theory and practice. This relatively brief account of the 'geography' of spirituality will not try to cover the extensive range of writings on the topic, but it will help make sense of the developments and trends that have contributed to the current complex situation. For some educators, some of the issues addressed are still 'over their horizon' and not yet matters of concern. The argument here is that all educators, especially religious educators, need to pay attention to these issues. The first step, and indeed a prerequisite for any substantial education in spirituality, is that the educators themselves be well enough informed about the issues to make their educational transactions with students productive.

An evaluative approach to studying spirituality is not only important for the professional development of educators, it needs to enter into educational planning of the curriculum, and it needs to be followed through into the pedagogy of classroom practice especially in religious education. For example, in the religious school, it is not enough to give students access to the religious spirituality of their faith tradition. They also need to learn how to look critically and wisely at the cultural conditioning of people's beliefs, values and behaviour. Many of the same issues noted below need to be part of young people's study agenda in spirituality.

There is a need to refer to an example of a religious spirituality. Because of the limitations to space, this is located elsewhere (Crawford & Rossiter, 2005). This will help identify issues relevant to an evaluation of spirituality by contrasting religious with non-religious spiritualities. Many, including youth, are eclectic in drawing on a wide range of sources, both religious and non-religious for their spirituality. Also, attention to questions about non-religious spirituality is important in relation to values in public education, to values education and to a spiritual/moral dimension to education generally.

Distinctions Between the 'Religious' and the 'Spiritual': Issues for What Constitutes Spirituality

Traditionally the words religious and spiritual were synonymous. Hence, spirituality was naturally considered to be religious. However, this is no longer the case; a distinction, and in some instances, a divergence, has developed between the

spiritual and the religious. Consequently, there are spiritualities that are not based in, or dependent on, religion. Any education in spirituality, whether it be in a religious context or not, needs to understand how and why this development occurred; it needs to be able to explore both religious and non-religious spirituality, their differences and their interrelationships, and to take into account the issues that have shaped thinking about current use of the word spirituality. This is also a fundamentally important question for religions, because one of the major problems they face today is their contemporary spiritual relevance, i.e., is religion satisfying people's spiritual needs? In addition, this thinking can help facilitate dialogue about spirituality between religious groups and those who are not religious.

The following is a brief consideration of what affected this distinction between the spiritual and the religious, with consequences for what is understood as spirituality, in particular, showing how the notion of spirituality can be dissociated from religion. Some of the influences will be explored in more detail later. Each of the issues identified is also pertinent to an evaluative perspective on spirituality. The analysis is organised under the following headings:

1. Secularisation and distinctions between religious and spiritual language
2. Privatisation of religion
3. Public rituals and private devotion (external observance and the personal)
4. Contemporary emphasis on experience (implications for personal autonomy and religious authority)
5. Meeting spiritual needs; spirituality as a consumer commodity
6. Scientific rationalism and modern religious studies
7. Postmodern views of religion

Secularisation and Distinctions Between Religious and Spiritual Language

Increasing secularisation in Western societies is evident in the decreased prominence of formal religion in political, social and everyday life. Participation in formal religious practices decreased significantly; religious authority and distinctive religious culture declined as influences on people's thinking and behavior; people were getting by with less formal and conscious attention to their religion.

Secularisation implied that religions did not have a monopoly on spirituality, and this supported the notion of non-religious spirituality. The spiritual/moral domain was not restricted to religion. Indeed, for some people, their spiritual/moral concerns had little if any link with formal religion. For others, religion permeated their spiritual concerns. While there were others who retained an affiliation with religion, their spirituality included elements from beyond their own faith tradition, including both religious and non-religious components. In public discourse, shared religious beliefs and shared religious language could no longer be presumed. Other spiritual language had to be used for the discussion of spiritual, moral and religious issues in pluralist communities where a variety of religions and non-religious world views were represented. Words like beliefs, values and commitments were used more frequently, acknowledging the presence of different religions and religious

spiritualities in the same way that the use of inclusive language was developed to acknowledge gender differences that non-inclusive language tended to ignore. This situation called for the development of a language of spirituality that was not dependent on Christianity or any other religion, while it should be able to accommodate religion comfortably. This supported a distinction between 'religious' and 'spiritual' but not an exclusive distinction.

Privatisation of Religion

A consequence of secularisation was the tendency to regard religious beliefs as a private and personal matter that did not need to be acknowledged in public. In turn, this could make people think that religious beliefs were a matter of 'opinion'; and one person's opinion was 'as good as another's'. It was easy to associate the word spiritual (and spirituality) with this private domain, and to use religious to describe the public, formal world of religion. In addition, the words 'organised religion' were used to differentiate formal religion from the private or personal religion of the individual.

For some, the gradual disappearance of formal religious practice and religious imagery from their everyday lives made them wonder whether they were religious anymore; or wonder in what sense were they religious. Spirituality was a good word for this situation: people retained religious beliefs about God, the afterlife, prayer and a moral code, and they acknowledged a likely influence of religion in the values they absorbed from their family life. For some, spirituality referred to their ultimate beliefs about the purpose of life, while it had little relevance to their everyday living. For others, their notion of spirituality was very much concerned with daily life as it included values, commitments, intuitions, wisdom, attitudes and creativity.

Public Rituals and Private Devotion (External Observance and the Personal)

Following in the wake of the above mentioned developments, there was a tendency to associate 'religious' with formal, communal rituals in the faith community, while 'spiritual' was associated with the realm of personal, private devotion. The distinction was used most by those who wanted to distance themselves from religious rituals. Unfortunately, the usage can easily create a false dichotomy, as if formal communal religious activity would be empty of personal devotion, an idea that has been foreign to the religious faith traditions.

Contemporary Emphasis on Experience (Implications for Personal Autonomy and Religious Authority)

Confluent with the above, developments has been an increasing reliance on people's own experience as their touchstone for truth, authenticity and lifestyle. This changes attitudes to religious authority and to religious traditions. People imbued with a strong sense of individualism can tend to measure the relevance of religious

authority and religious traditions in terms of how they enhance or inhibit their own personal lifestyle and sense of autonomy. They can feel that they have direct personal access to spirituality and God, without being dependent on formal religion and religious leaders. In turn, this affects the way they could associate 'spiritual' with the former and 'religious' with the latter.

Existential concerns have become so prominent that they can limit historical perspective and interest in future developments. This existential emphasis affects the notion of the spiritual. It has to have here-and-now relevance; it must be linked to current feelings of well-being.

Meeting Spiritual Needs: Spirituality as a Consumer Commodity

There is nothing wrong with expecting spirituality to meet contemporary spiritual needs. However, caution is needed because it is only a short step from here to a consumerist approach to spirituality. Consumerist spirituality needs scrutiny. If spirituality is regarded as just another aspect of human nature that needs 'development' and 'satisfaction', then spirituality can readily become commodified and marketed. Commercial gain can be part of the driving force in providing opportunities for spiritual development. The same can apply to religion, as evident in some of the religious programs that air on Sunday morning television.

Caution is recommended with respect to consumerist spirituality for much the same reason that caution is important for consumerist views of education (medicine, law etc.): they have the potential to lose sight of the sanctity of the human person and deal with people as object consumers for commercial gain. It is unlikely that we will ever be without some forms of commercial spirituality and religion. However, an education in spirituality may help alert people to potential problems.

Scientific Rationalism and Modern Religious Studies

Somewhat different from the above distinctions between the religious and the spiritual have been the effects of scientific rationalism and modern religious studies. These are not necessarily linked but each has affected the cultural and intellectual climate in Western countries as far as perceptions of religion are concerned.

Scientific rationalism over the last two centuries (influenced by the Enlightenment) has tended to undermine simple views of religious truth as well as to bring traditional religious authorities into question. If science and reason have provided such a successful explanatory account of human life and culture, this can give the impression that religion has been superseded. However, while this interpretation may be dismissive of religion, if it still recognises a spiritual/moral domain, then it will further the distinction between the religious and the spiritual and will support a non-religious spirituality.

Perhaps more than any contemporary religious studies, Biblical scholarship has had a profound influence in enhancing Christian theology, and in turn, in enhancing Christian spirituality. Nevertheless, from outside Christian circles,

systematic studies of religions can give some the impression that religions are generic (variations on a common theme), and that the idea of absolute religious truth is a myth that religions foster. This furthers the distinction between the religious and the spiritual; it sees religions as different 'avenues' to the spiritual.

Postmodern Views of Religion

Cultural postmodernity questions the validity of metanarratives, while acknowledging their socially constructed, contextual meanings and cultural functions. This highlighting of uncertainty in personal knowledge creates doubts about religious truth claims. Somewhat inevitably, this thinking steers a course in favour of 'spiritual' rather than 'religious'. The hyper-questioning stance of extreme postmodernism can incline people to dismiss tradition and history, while at the same time discourage hope for the future. This approach readily reinforces a 'here-and-nowism'—a relatively complete existentialist and pragmatic focus. Such a focus limits the breadth of human purposes and often goes hand in hand with present consumerism as the meaning and purpose to life as if 'I consume, therefore I am' (Bridger, 2001, p. 10).

While for many people the spiritual and the religious are so closely related as to be indistinguishable, the questions considered above show that distinctions and polarities have emerged between the two with consequent implications for the understanding of spirituality. They also raise issues for the evaluation of spirituality estimating the quality of what is offered as spirituality against specified criteria.

Non-religious Spiritualities

For those who were consciously non-religious, the language of spirituality provided a suitable alternative to religion. In some instances, the alternative to religion was sought on the grounds that religion was failing to provide an appropriate and meaningful spirituality. As already noted, a confluence of pressures from the advent of science, rationalism (from the Enlightenment) and secularisation affected the cogency, plausibility and perceived relevance of religions; they had been the traditional sources of meaning. A recent example of the substitution of a relatively non-religious spirituality is evident in the book *SQ: Spiritual intelligence, the ultimate intelligence* (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). They concluded that: 'The rapid of changes in the Western world over the past three centuries have left conventional religions struggling to be meaningful'. Hence, people need to use their own innate spiritual capacities 'to forge new paths to find some fresh expression of meaning, something that touches us and that can guide us from within' (Zohar & Marshall, 2000, p. 8).

This emphasis on personal experience, autonomy and relevance or meaningfulness was contrasted with 'conventional religion' which was stereotyped as '...an externally imposed set of rules and voice. It is top-down, inherited from priests and prophets and holy books or absorbed through the family and tradition' (Zohar & Marshall, 2000, p. 9). The suggestion that religion is only needed by those who are

'spiritually immature' is commonly associated with this view. Levin (2000), also writing about spiritual intelligence, considered that this new spirituality enabled people to 'cut out the middle man', bypassing organised religion and 'gurus':

In the old external order there is a hierarchy. 'God', or some ultimate authority figure, sits at the top, followed by his 'Church', the priest, the institution, men, women, children, animals – in that order. To relate to 'God' you must go through a priest, and a church. But that is no longer the case. We are all being urged to connect to spirit directly...Instead of relating through the old triangle, the old hierarchy, we are being asked to connect directly with God, or the force of spirituality, or the force of the creative – however you see it, the words often confuse the issue. It means that, as well as dramatic changes in your relation to spirituality, the role of the priest or the guru is also changing. Altogether. They are no longer your link to spirituality or God (Levin, 2000, pp. 38–39).

This argument has appeal for those interested in spirituality, but who want little or nothing to do with organised religion. It does propose something of a 'straw man' image of religious spirituality; there are many practitioners of a religious spirituality who would claim much personal autonomy and direct access to God. For example, there are many Christians who draw strongly on their denomination's religious traditions for their spirituality, while being relatively autonomous in relation to Church authority. They will make up their own minds when it comes to disputed questions. Nevertheless, there are a significant number of people, including many youth, who feel that religion is mainly irrelevant to their spiritual quest, and this understanding motivates their search for a non-religious spirituality.

A major type of non-religious spiritualities are formal groups that consciously espouse a spiritual nature for humans and propose practices to enhance spiritual well-being. Fuller (2001) in his book, *Spiritual but not religious*, gave an account of a wide range of such groups. Some examples of metaphysical philosophies from the nineteenth century were: the Universalisers, Free Masonry, Swedenborgianism, Transcendentalism, Shakerism, Mesmerism, Spiritualism, Mind Cure, and Theosophy. There is an even greater range in the twentieth century.

Other non-religious spiritual groups focus on astrology and the occult; or they constitute some form of New Age spirituality. In addition, there are groups that draw to various extents on Eastern religious and Eastern non-religious thought and practice.

Then there is a considerable number of psychological/spiritual movements and practices that have been used in association with both religious and non-religious spiritualities. These range from traditional Rogerian Encounter Groups, to the popular Myers Briggs personality inventory, the Enneagram and rebirthing etc. Useful psychological insights and wisdom are readily incorporated into spirituality. The word spirituality has also been appropriated by what has been called the 'self-help' personal development industry. This is a diverse group including various therapies, holistic movements, meditation, yoga, etc., catering for people's

interest in furthering their own psychological development and well-being. They often promote spirituality as a central aspect of human development.

In Western societies there is now a large smorgasbord of spiritualities ranging from particular religious spiritualities to many different non-religious spiritualities. In addition, people may be eclectic in borrowing from different spiritual sources and practices without changing their basic spiritual orientation. For example, Christians will incorporate spiritual insights from various psychological movements and they may borrow from Eastern religions and spiritualities.

From the perspective of an education in spirituality (in different contexts) the evaluative purpose outlined earlier becomes important. Such an education would seek to inform about the origins and history of spiritualities, about the social developments that have affected spirituality, as well as consider criteria for evaluating spiritualities.

The following sections will work further towards a set of evaluative criteria by considering some issues for spirituality, and including more detailed comment on some questions noted earlier.

Consumer Spirituality

Spirituality should help meet personal needs. But if this is its exclusive focus, three developments become more likely. Firstly, individuals lose a sense of community and traditional meanings; secondly, commitments to others, and to particular communities are weakened or abandoned; and thirdly, spirituality tends to become yet another commodity for a consumerist lifestyle. It can be marketed and exploited for its 'feel-good' potential. The noble aim to seek spirituality as part of personal development can be affected by a consumerist ethic.

This is evident where religion and religious spirituality become 'business oriented'. For example, the contemporary Christian minister Rick Warren referred to at the start of this chapter calls himself a 'Stealth Evangelist'. He sees himself capitalising on a 'new great Awakening spiritually in America'. The newspaper article on Warren said that he 'encouraged ministers to think of their churches as *businesses* and congregations as *customers*.' It concluded that he was appealing to a notion of 'a comforting God who acts like a great therapist in the sky'—thus compromising religious concerns for social issues and social justice (Baird, 2004, p. 29). The author considered that 'while the desire for personal change is admirable, an obsession with self-fulfilment distracts from the need to change the world'. She quoted favourably a more desirable alternative view from another pastor:

Is it enough to preach sermons that centre on individual struggles and offer guidance along the path to a more meaningful and fulfilling personal life? I can't help thinking this is a time when we should be challenging our people to move beyond the personal to the public—indeed, the political—and commit

themselves to transforming the world ...Jesus, our role model, not only cared for hurting individuals but also shattered the cultural conventions of his day and turned his society upside down (Baird, 2004, p. 29).

The uncertainty and existentialism of postmodernity naturally incline people towards consumerism: 'if life is fraught with ontological uncertainty, why not find meaning in consuming as much as possible while we can?' (Bridger, 2001, p. 10). If this happens, spirituality can lose its transcendent perspective and its capacity to critically interpret the culture. In religious terminology, the prophetic quality of spirituality is diminished as it becomes a relatively indistinguishable part of the prevailing consumerist lifestyle. In considering this aspect of spirituality, one writer claimed that:

postmodern consumerism is ...a worldview reaching into every aspect of Western culture, shaping our lives from cradle to grave. It constitutes *the* dominant metanarrative ... 'Consumerism is ubiquitous and ephemeral. It is arguably *the* religion of the late twentieth century (Bridger, 2001, p. 10).

Traditionally, religion provided a systematic *world view* in which the Divine provided overall meaning and purpose to life. With postmodern cultural trends, the importance of world view recedes into the background. Instead, what becomes important for individuals is *life world* and its components. The need to find some overarching meaning system for life can be supplanted by a concern to maximise the consumer products that enhance life style and immediate sense of well-being.

Attention needs to be drawn to a number of aspects of consumerist and commercial spirituality that are important for the critical evaluation of contemporary spirituality:

- Consumerist lifestyle emphasis: In relation to the popular contemporary quest for spiritual fulfilment, it is evident that a 'plethora of spiritualities, each with its own claim to provide a final answer to existential angst, reflects exactly the pattern and dynamic of consumerism' (Bridger, 2001, p. 11). This pattern is evident in some who search for meaning and satisfaction in religion, or in esoteric religious practice, alternative spiritualities, new age and even in alcohol or drugs.
- Existential gratification: There is an emphasis on the gratification of personal needs and interests here and now. How people *feel* about spirituality will be more influential than their thinking—feelings about comfort and well-being will sway choices about the spiritual. On this point Bridger considered that: 'The 'instant satisfaction' culture of the shopping mall is so deeply embedded in the Western psyche that, insofar as the search after spirituality represents the consumerist ethic, it is to be expected that those engaged in the search will conform to this ethic' (Bridger, 2001, p. 12).
- Consumer notion of freedom: Personal freedom tends to be interpreted in terms of individual consumer choice from a variety of options.

- Private and personal: Spirituality tends to be regarded as more of a private and personal matter than something that is rooted in community and historical tradition. Spirituality can then be like 'personal opinion' and 'one opinion is as good as another', and is 'entitled to equal respect'.
- Individualistic frame of reference: The emphasis is on the individual constructing his/her own version of spirituality. 'Spirituality becomes a matter of subjective experience whose efficacy is judged by the extent to which it meets the subject's self-perceived needs and desires. And since these are in a constant state of flux, consistent only in being driven by the impulse to gratification, the spiritual search consists of a neverending stream of sensation-gathering as the individual moves from one attempt at fulfilment to the next' (Bridger, 2001, p. 12). The individual's own experience becomes the touchstone for authentic spirituality.

If spirituality embraces values and commitments that are not just self-centred, then at times it will conflict with personal feelings and individual interests. Fidelity to commitments will not always be emotionally comfortable; life motivated by a healthy spirituality will not always take the easiest 'feel-good' path. Commitment to other people and to long term life goals can be aspects of spirituality that 'transcend' self-centredness, and thus transcend consumerism. This echoes a particular interpretation of Christian religious spirituality that it is precisely in a level of self-forgetfulness that goes with concern for others, that individuals may find their 'true' selves.

A Style Spectrum of Spiritualities: From Organisational/Structural Religious to DIY (Do It Yourself) On-the-Run Psychological

In the diverse developments within both religious and non-religious spiritualities, it is possible to discern a prominent polarity formed from the confluence of the cultural influences and issues noted above. Towards one end of the spectrum is what can be described as *organisational/structural religious spirituality*. This is where a religious spirituality is strongly located within a local faith community. It is defined and expressed through worship, liturgy and religious practices as well as through authoritative religious teachings. The faith is articulated in a systematic theology or world view, including a moral code. A comprehensive beliefs package is accepted, even if individuals do not understand some aspects, and even if some beliefs are puzzling. Religious identification is tied up with firm, and often relatively unquestioning acceptance of the orthodox teachings. Religious identity is regarded as important; it is defined over and against other religious and non-religious groups. What the individuals believe and their religious practices, in addition to nurturing their spirituality, also have a 'boundary construction' role, serving as boundary markers for the religious group, keeping them separate and distinctive. There is an emphasis on absolute truth and certainty in religious claims. Often there is a strong focus on preparation for eternity, on salvation and atonement for sins.

This sort of spirituality gives a strong sense of personal and spiritual security. It sees religious beliefs and practices as defining one's integrity and they also help in 'coaxing' God to intervene and make their lives more successful (not only spiritually). It braces itself against cultural postmodernity (and any other influences) that may be perceived as dangerous because of their eroding effects on faith. This style of spirituality can be found in all traditional as well as relatively new religions, in both older and younger members. Also, it is evident in some non-religious spiritual groups.

Towards the other end of an extensive spectrum is what can be called *DIY On-the-run psychological spirituality*. This spirituality is more personally constructed according to need and less dependent on a religious institution with a comprehensive beliefs package. There is more personal freedom, but this puts more onus on the individual for constructing and living out a spirituality. It is somewhat 'tailor made' to help negotiate life on-the-run, dealing with spiritual questions as they arise with interpretations and constructions that are felt to be the best available wisdom. It may well draw substantially on the individual's own traditional religious heritage (e.g., Scripture and Theology), but it will be a well-developed and usually complex interpretation. It is focused on present life (a psychological emphasis) and not much concerned with a hereafter, although this is not dismissed, especially when death looms closer with old age. It adverts to the spiritual and moral dimensions of ongoing life experience. It may seek transcendent and religious experience as well.

Some individuals have moved towards this style of spirituality in varying degrees because they were not functioning comfortably within the organisational/structural framework described above. Others may find themselves towards this end of the spectrum by default, by being too busy, or through lack of much conscious attention to spirituality. Some may be in this position being consciously spiritual but not religious. Others have this style of spirituality while remaining identified with their traditional religion, but their mode of participation in the church or religion is markedly different from the organisational/structural style. Some of the characteristics of a DIY On-the-run spirituality are given below. They resonate with what was said earlier in the chapter about trends and issues in spirituality.

Becoming more personally autonomous and responsible for one's spirituality may result in wanting to select aspects that have a desired function or meet particular needs, hence the standard world-view set of teachings and organisational religious practice will not be satisfying; or the individual will not take much notice of the beliefs that they feel are marginal. Multiple comparisons of religions and non-religious views of life can incline individuals to de-absolutise religious truth claims, seeing them as more symbolic than historical/factual, pointing in a valuable spiritual direction, but not *all* of the truth. They can be eclectic in sourcing spirituality beyond their own religious tradition. They experience secularisation but do not see it as a spiritual problem, and being busy, they may not have the time for a lot of religious practice if it does not seem to meet any real need.

The psychological emphasis implies that this spirituality seeks to be relevant to people's lives and moral decision making. It emphasises individuality but this is not necessarily anti-communitarian. Nevertheless, communities of this type, whether

they be religious or non-religious groups, have a different style of social and spiritual functioning from one of the organisational/structural type. However, it is common for local religious faith communities to be far from homogeneous, having a great range of spiritualities represented from across the complete spectrum. Hence it is usual in communities of faith, perhaps even normal, for there to be give and take, and even some conflict arising from different spiritualities and different needs. Sometimes faith communities can work together and rise above such differences in spiritualities but sometimes they cannot. Much depends on the leadership, key personalities, distribution of power etc. It is not uncommon to find these same differences in spiritualities within a family group.

Some with a DIY style of spirituality remain very active and involved in their faith community; for others, it is their style of spirituality that draws them away from organised religion. This DIY on-the-run spirituality can get by comfortably with a measure of acknowledged natural uncertainty about the big spiritual issues of life, God, death and afterlife. It does not need to rely on the traditional package of beliefs, selecting wisdom from a variety of sources that makes sense of their experience and can guide their moral life. They are more aware of the 'real uncertainties' both in life and religion than the 'unreal certainties' they sometimes perceive in the organisational/structural style of religious spirituality. For the DIY style of spirituality, there is less need for religious identity boundaries.

This spectrum ranging from structural/organisational to DIY on-the-run is important for interpreting the diversity of spiritualities in youth. It also signals the to-be-expected problems with an education in spirituality that is sponsored by the official religion or church. Official formal religious education, especially in religious schools, tends to have a curriculum that naturally leans towards the organisational/structural because it is institutionally sponsored. Hence there are difficulties to be negotiated for both teachers and students whose spiritual orientation is towards the other end of the spectrum.

Healthy Spirituality: Criteria for the Identification and Evaluation of Spirituality

Judging what is a healthy and desirable spirituality always takes place within a specific context where there are presumed values and beliefs whether these are religious or not. Here a starting list of evaluative criteria is proposed that can be further developed. The schema can be used pedagogically for identifying, analysing and judging the strengths/weaknesses of what is being offered as spirituality. The list is generic and could be applied to religious and non-religious spiritualities. It needs to be contextualised with the articulated beliefs/values of the particular group engaged in evaluation. It will also be useful for individuals in the personal appraisal of their own spirituality.

Criteria such as these (with amendments and additions) can be used in teaching/learning where the topic spirituality is being explored in the classroom. Also, engaging students in the task of considering what might constitute a 'healthy'

Table 1. Evaluative criteria for the identification and appraisal of spirituality

Initial list of evaluative criteria for the identification and evaluation of spirituality	Evaluative questions and issues
Transcendence	<p>The particular understanding of transcendence: Is it a human transcendence or does it include a notion of god or higher power? Is this higher power personal or a non-personal creative life force? In what ways does the spirituality relate to religion?</p>
Frame of reference: the individual, as well as something larger than the individual	<p>The frame of reference for spirituality needs to respect the uniqueness of the individual; however, if the frame of reference is no larger than the immediate personal needs and interests of the individual, there is a danger of self-centredness and narcissism. To what extent does the frame of reference for this spirituality take into account community at both local and wider levels? (human/social environment). What historical traditions in spirituality give perspective to contemporary concerns, and a balanced interpretation of existential needs? Is there a custodial concern for the physical and animal environments?</p>
Personal reflection	<p>Cultivation of a habit of reflection on life experience and contemporary issues. Includes critical interpretation of culture. Development of a constructive, resilient personal meaning for life.</p>
Confidence in human knowing	<p>A healthy spirituality needs to come to terms with uncertainties about meaning and value that go with postmodernist dimensions to contemporary Western society. This includes confidence in personal knowing, while recognising the natural limitations to socially constructed knowledge. Personal knowing may be imperfect and in need of ongoing evaluation; however, it can provide an authentic basis for human meaning and can inform constructive decision making and commitments.</p>
Inputs that inform and challenge spiritual understandings.	<p>A healthy spirituality is presumed not to be static. It includes openness to activities (reading, education, new experience etc.) that prompt reflection and continued development of spirituality. Openness to learning from other spiritualities.</p>

Continued

Table 1. *Continued*

Initial list of evaluative criteria for the identification and evaluation of spirituality	Evaluative questions and issues
	This view of spirituality presumes that it is not enough to claim to be spiritual in a nominal way – there needs to be some activity that challenges and enhances spirituality, or that shows spirituality in ‘action’.
Spiritually motivated values and commitments.	Spirituality that informs and inspires values and commitments, and a sense of social justice. Spirituality, values and commitments affect personal action and action on behalf of others.

spirituality has considerable educational potential. This list of evaluative criteria implies a value position about what constitutes spiritual health. In turn, this is based on a particular view of the human person. Three of the principal concerns in this list are as follows:

Firstly, there is no doubt that a healthy spirituality should enhance the personal and social life of individuals. However, if the personal needs and interests of the individual are the exclusive frame of reference for spirituality, this can more easily move into self-centredness and narcissism. A balance is needed so that the personal meaning of the individual embraces something larger than the self. This is needed for both religious and non-religious spiritualities. Fundamental to this view is the belief that individuals are born human but they become persons through social interaction. In other words, being both a contributing and a receiving member of human community is central to human nature. When applied to spirituality, this means that authentic spirituality has to be community related; you cannot be fully spiritual on your own. This thinking proposes that the frame of reference for spirituality needs to include family, local community and the wider human community. In addition, it considers that responsible stewardship for the environment should also be part of the value base of spirituality.

Secondly, these criteria propose that a healthy spirituality should not be static and not just ‘implied’ in the way people live their lives. It needs to be sustained and developed by reflection, education (in the broadest sense) and habits of spiritual activity. For example, it is considered not enough to claim that ‘I have beliefs and values’, ‘I believe in God’ or ‘Spirituality is implied in my lifestyle’. An authentic spirituality is proposed as one that motivates behaviour and leads to personal/social action. Healthy spirituality continually challenges the individual to practice, extend and deepen spiritual insights. Healthy spirituality is cultivated.

Thirdly a healthy spirituality needs confidence in the personal knowing process. The postmodern strand in contemporary Western culture calls absolutes and

metanarratives into question, and its emphasis on the uncertainties and ambiguities in socially constructed human knowledge have led to excessive subjectivism, contextualism, existentialism and relativism. While it may be unrealistic to claim knowledge of absolute truth, it is both realistic and pragmatic to believe that one can know part of the truth with confidence, and act on this with integrity. Given that the uncertainties in knowing (especially in the personal domain) are natural to the human condition, and if this is accepted, it is both possible and reasonable to claim that one can construct a spirituality that is authentically human with respect to self and others. This spirituality will not be perfect; it will advert to spiritual traditions, but it will not be constrained by them; it will make mistakes; it should be open to revision and enhancement. But it can help people chart a meaningful and hopeful life in uncertain times, times that seem to have unprecedented opportunities for human life and wealth, while at the same time having pressures, gross inequities and threatening uncertainties that affect basic human meanings and quality of life. Such a spirituality can turn the contemporary emphasis on being critical to advantage by engaging in the critical interpretation of culture to discern the influences on people's thinking and behaviour, and to evaluate their significance. For example, it needs to critically evaluate postmodern thought.

Other views of spiritual health, not unlike what has been proposed here, have been discussed in the literature. Fisher (2000, 2001) noted the emergence of the term in writings about health. He considered that it was a pervasive dimension to overall health and well-being, and that it involved harmonious relationships in four domains – the personal, communal, environmental and transcendent. This is consistent with writings about spirituality that understand it as self-awareness coupled with relationships with others and the environment, a 'relational consciousness' spirituality (Hay & Nye, 1998). Others have considered the importance of spirituality for overall personal health (Goodloe & Arreola, 1992; Hjelm & Johnson, 1996), and its contribution to personal 'resilience' (Witham, 2001; Pargament, 1997). These are inner resources that help people cope with life, particularly when there are difficulties to be overcome.

No doubt there will be debate about the evaluative criteria proposed here. The list needs to be debated, modified, and informed by the beliefs and values of particular groups seeking to educate the young in spirituality. The very process of debating these criteria and the beliefs and values that underpin them is a particularly valuable part of an education in spirituality for both adults and school students. Pedagogically, a scheme like this is useful when teaching spirituality because teachers and students are drawn into considering what sort of spirituality is being explored. This chapter, and the issues and evaluative criteria it has explored, can help in this process.

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SPIRITUALITY AS A BRIDGE TO RELIGION AND FAITH

Dr David Tacey

School of Critical Enquiry, La Trobe University, Melbourne

‘There exists some point at which I can meet God in a real and experimental contact with his infinite actuality’ (Thomas Merton, 1961, p. 37).

Religion in a Disbelieving World

Currently many people perceive religion as irrelevant, especially in the Western style democracies. Religion must not capitulate to this criticism, but nor can it afford to dismiss it lightly. For the fact remains that religious ideas and symbols seem remote and alien to an increasing number of people, especially to young people (O’Murchu, 1997).

This is not their ‘fault’ and religious tradition cannot attack them for this failing. It is simply a failing of our secular and materialist culture. This process of disenchantment has taken place gradually over hundreds of years, since the rise of the empirical sciences (Berger, 1999). It may take hundreds more to restore the religious to its true importance, so we are in this for the long haul. Ironically, it may be the new sciences that restore the dignity of religion, just as the old sciences took it away (Ward, 1997). The new sciences will take us closer to the heart of reality than we have so far achieved, since we have been studying the surfaces of life with a primarily mechanical logic (Pearce, 2002).

The problem is that our intellectual enlightenment has been reductive and incomplete. We have seen through the superstitious and mythological trappings of religion and exposed these as ‘illusory’ or false. But our ongoing intellectual enlightenment has to take us further, beyond the superstitious surface of religion to its living spiritual core (Trias, 1998). Then we might arrive at a vastly different vision of the world. There is a deeper dimension of religion which is beyond superstition and cannot be destroyed by rationalistic enquiry.

By definition the secular does not understand the religious, and is resistant to it. Modern society is profoundly secular, and even children in religious schools are primarily identified with the secular order. They want to feel part of the mainstream, and are not keen to identify as 'religious' if it means appearing eccentric or out of step with social reality as they see it.

Secularism often claims that religion is 'indoctrination', but secular materialism is one of the greatest indoctrinations of all (Carroll, 1998). It has virtually made 'reality' itself appear flat and secular. It has excluded mystery, eternity, and depth from the real. In a great feat of mental engineering, secularism has made its view of reality appear as 'common sense', and it has made religion seem aberrant or unreal. Many in the educated West go along with this worldview, not realising that they have been coerced by a materialist ideology.

Religion Needs to Dialogue With the Inner Life

Fundamentalists of various persuasions believe that the task of religion is to fight back, to match might with might, to wage a campaign to combat the rising tide of secularism. The logic of this position is seductive, but it undermines the whole point of religion which is to lift us into an experience of God, not to lower us into the terror of aggression, violence, or counter-indoctrination. Fundamentalism is a regressive cultural force, in my opinion, and my sincere hope is that it does not capture the passion of the religious spirit of our time.

The religious challenge, as I see it, is not to oppose science or secularism, by advocating creationism or 'intelligent design' as an alternative to natural science. This is an impoverished route that indicates an appalling lack of creativity and imagination. The real task ahead is for religion to join with the sciences in creating a new vision of reality (Griffiths, 1989). Religion must stop being anti-modern or pre-modern, and become thoroughly post-modern, a progressive force in society which gathers the best of the sciences and leads us to a new attitude of awe, reverence, and wonder. At the core of the secular world is a deep emptiness and hollowness, and recent scholars have argued that religion can speak to this emptiness and lead it to a new awareness of the necessity of the sacred (Caputo, 2001).

Charismatic and Pentecostal renewal is one way out of our contemporary plight. However, it often strikes me as cultic activity or passionate entertainment rather than a pathway into faith or spirituality (Schultz, 2005). Religion has to expand its imaginative resources, and offer other ways to reach people, beyond fundamentalist re-packagings, reactionary moralism, or cultic revivalism.

Clearly, the old forms of religious education involving 'instruction' in the faith, preaching, or intellectual propositions, are no longer enough. It is coldly external and does not generate enough human feeling or transformation. It no longer captures or revitalises the human imagination. But there is another way of working with religion in dark or destitute times. We have to dig deeper and involve the subjectivity of individuals. Religion needs to establish an *existential*

purchase on the soul, and once it does this it will blossom and regenerate (Rahner, 1975; Johnston, 1995).

Beyond the hard, abrasive or showy methods of revivalism, there is a softer way of working which involves dialoguing with what is going on beneath the surface of people's lives. This is the way of spiritual dialogue, and its chief elements are conversation, prophetic imagination, and psychological insight (Tacey, 2004). Spiritual dialogue involves receptivity to where people are at, and a drawing forth of the spiritual content that is already present in their lives. This strategy is particularly suited to young adults who do not like to be told what to believe by outside authorities but who welcome any sincere attempt to illuminate the semi-dark realm of their interiority (Tacey, 2001).

Religion needs to have more faith in the capacities of the human soul. Too often, there is the anxious thought that religion has to be 'added' to life from outside (Rahner, 1975). This leads to the familiar patterns of evangelising and good works, but there is not enough emphasis on the internal processes of the soul. There is an inside story which is important to grasp, and religion needs to become more psychologically sophisticated if it is to move confidently into the future (Jung, 1933).

The art of spiritual dialogue is the art of drawing out the religious life that is already there, but that has often been repressed or ignored. My work begins with the premise: 'Called or not called, God is always present.' This motto was carved above the front doorway of Carl Jung's house in Zürich, and remains there today. God is eternally present, but we are not always aware of this presence. In secular times, God is mostly not *called* by us, but that does not mean that we are not called by God. As Thomas Merton (1961) has said: 'It is not we who choose to awaken ourselves, but God who chooses to awaken us' (p. 10). Those who believe that religion has to be constantly applied and supported from without are missing the point of God's eternal presence, and are inflating the importance of religious institutions. The demise of our institutions in our time may have nothing to do with the demise of the perceived reality of God.

Spiritual Life Beneath the Surface

Although people's minds may be swayed by secularism, their hearts or souls are not convinced. At a deeper level, people are waiting to be drawn into a new and different story. Secularism is a kind of mask, hiding a secret, underneath life that only rarely breaks through to the surface. One of my students wrote:

Underneath their hardened secular shells, people still need to believe that there is more to their existence than just one fragile life, that, in the sweep of time, is over in a blink of the eye. The majority of people still have faith, or rapidly try to recover faith in the critical and urgent moments of our lives. This is today's reality, which is confounding to me: why do we wait for adverse circumstances to occur before we reach out to touch the face of God and to be embraced by the holy? (Carolyn, 2002).

Another student wrote: 'Currently, most people are seeking something beyond their profane existence' (Michael, 2002).

These are challenging statements, and I believe religion has to learn more about the psychodynamics of secular experience. Many people are only atheists on the surface, while underneath the soul longs for the healing embrace of God.

Many of us are split between reason and faith. With our heads we cannot support religion which seems unbelievable. With our hearts we are open to spiritual meaning. We reject belief in dogma, but we might still be capable of faith in God. In the past, faith was something that was passed on from one generation to another, handed down the line with love and reverence. But this no longer works because science and education have stopped the mind from accepting the gift of faith without question.

Today, faith is often acquired, if at all, through spirituality, that is, through an internal recognition of the importance of faith to the soul. The external 'passing on' of faith has been blocked, but the internal route has hardly been explored. If religion wants to survive, it has to make the ground of our experience a primary site for investigation. Our emphasis on tradition, which we often confuse with habit or convention, can blind us to the religious possibilities of our immediate experience.

Secular society alienates people from traditional religious forms, but it cannot entirely alienate people from their souls. The soul's longing for meaning, for contact with the sacred, remains intact, despite the secular assault on religious forms. This is why a phenomenon called 'spirituality' begins to rise up in the midst of secular society. This phenomenon is a shock to secularism and religion alike. This element of our experience cannot be held down but will keep coming back. Derrida said that the letters 're' at the start of 're-ligion' ensures that this activity will re-turn, re-vive, and re-new. 'Religion', he writes, is 'what succeeds in returning' (Derrida and Vattimo, 1998, p. 39).

But when the spirit rises again in secular conditions, it is not going to appear conventionally religious. It will not know itself as religious, because it is emerging from experience, not from tradition. The spirit falls out of theology and becomes existential. It falls out of theology and into psychology.

This is why countless young people today say they are 'spiritual but not religious'. They associate religion with what is outside, in the institutions, and do not understand that their internal lives are deeply religious. The word 'religion' has shrunk to mean something like church attendance. Spirituality *is* religion on the inside, but many youth do not understand this. But nor does formal religion recognise its essential kinship with spirituality. Hence there is a stand off, a two-way block, and a kind of phoney war. It is imperative to put an end to this war through understanding and dialogue (Schneiders, 1986).

Religion of the Future: Mystical, Experiential, Existential

The new spirituality longs for mysticism, not devotional worship; that is why traditional religion often fails to recognise it as religious. We have narrowed the term 'religious' to a series of conventional practices, but the new spirituality is not

churchy. Mysticism longs for an experience of God, not for God-talk. People do not want *talk* about God but a life-changing *encounter* with the sacred. The times have changed, but the churches have not changed with them. They still imagine that people will come to faith by the old routes, but this seems increasingly unlikely. People will only come to faith today through experience.

Religious tradition often objects to this: 'experience' of God is too great an expectation or ideal. 'This is simply not possible,' they reply, 'and today's people are being greedy, they are asking too much of God.' 'Who do modern people think they are?' 'Why do they think themselves worthy of what used to be reserved for saints and monastics?' 'What they are asking for can only be bestowed by the grace of God.'

Perhaps so, but this is the depth and extent of our hunger. We are destitute and, our hunger has made us desperate for the sacred. We can no longer be content with hearing about God second-hand, through sermons or scripture, through tradition or rumour. The postmodern person says: if God is real, I want to know this reality in my own life; I want to experience this reality.

Perhaps the term 'religious experience' sounds too grand and exalted for what people want. They do not expect the heavens to open to them; they do not expect to witness a miracle, or an angel descending. No, they ask for something more ordinary but no less life-changing: an intuition, an inner feeling of security, a deep, gut-based recognition that God exists and that they are beloved of God.

It is of course ironic that secularism has given rise to such an intense hunger for God. Secularism sets the conditions for its own demise by depriving people of what they need to survive (Berger, 1999). But as I have said, the new spirituality is not easily satisfied by the old religious forms. The churches cannot easily minister to the new hunger, which looks greedy, intense, individualistic, psychological and heretical beside what the church has dispensed in the past. New wineskins are needed for the new wine.

If religion wants to play a part in this new development, it will have to rediscover its own mystical heritage and resources. It will have to dig deep into the area of spiritual exercises, meditation, mystical prayer and chanting, all of which are designed to draw out the latent spiritual feeling in people's lives. The religious model needs to change: we need to draw more freely on the God within, on the sacred sources within the self, on the interiority of the soul. If Christianity cannot reinvent itself as a resource for spirituality, my prediction is that Buddhism will take over. Youth cultures seem already headed to the East.

The Courage to Face Our Emptiness

Beneath our secular mask, there is a great emptiness, a God-shaped hole. The best option for the religious educator is to move toward this absence, to speak to it, to give voice to it. But this has to be done tactfully, with boots off, tip-toeing in difficult and sensitive terrain. Many of us expend a great deal of energy pretending

things are 'okay', that things are terrific and getting better, and so to expose our inner emptiness can meet with enormous resistance.

The secular society pours enormous resources into our inner void, telling us that we will feel better if we consume more products, eat more food, drink more wine, or travel more often. The recognition that we are hollow inside is guarded with utter vigilance and enormous defensiveness. If we allowed ourselves to feel that hollowness, even for a minute, our secular mask would crumble. So there is naturally great resistance to the voice of religion whose job is to proclaim the existence of something more.

But in the postmodern world, there is an opportunity, an opening, a chink in the armour. It is not so easy any more to pretend that things are wonderful. As times get more desperate, old defences and devices no longer work. A student wrote this:

Attitudes to spirituality have changed in recent times, and have become more receptive. I don't think that it is seen as a weakness any more to admit to the feeling that there is something missing in our lives. In the modern era, to refer to the spirit, and to call attention to what was missing, might have raised the ire of those of us who felt we were getting along nicely without 'spirituality'. Today in the postmodern world it is more obvious that we are missing something, and to point this out is no longer seen as offensive or impolite (Amber, 2003).

I have found that as soon as the absence is acknowledged and faced, something new emerges. Nature abhors a vacuum, and it is the same with the soul, which is our inner piece of nature.

Spiritual Education: Working Behind Religious Lines

We are in an experimental phase, and the experiment must go on. In my work I have chosen to listen intently to what the students are saying and to try to accommodate it. I attempt to tune in to what the spirit is saying through the students and to adjust to that. The times calls us to be prophetic as prophecy is the only way to recover spirit when the spirit has gone underground and is no longer obvious to the upper world.

My job is not to be a religious educator, but I see myself as a spiritual educator. I seek to locate the spirit in students' lives, and to lead this spirit out to what it wants to become, to where it wants to go. I work in a secular institution which is opposed to religious instruction, so I have to be sensitive to the secular conditions of the university and not offend the values or standards of my employers.

Moreover, my students are diverse and multi-cultural: they come from all walks of life, all cultures and nations of the world. Some are atheists, a few are traditional believers of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, while others are followers of Hinduism and Buddhism. But the overwhelming majority of students are secular or 'lapsed religious' people. They have fallen out of their natal faiths or religious traditions because they have not been able to believe without any foundation to belief. They

are among the millions in society who are on personal journeys of meaning. The student population is diverse, plural, fragmented, and at times chaotic.

Therefore, it suits my workplace requirements, and my student population, to work behind religious lines, as it were. If asked directly, I will own up to being a Christian of mystical persuasion, but in my course on spirituality I almost never use religious terms or concepts, but try to speak to the spirit of the time in the terms that it most enjoys: that is, mystical, experiential, existential. Because I have a background in the depth psychology of Jung, I am able to use his psychological terminology instead of a theological one. This works well as I am able to speak about the things of the soul and the spirit without offending most people.

In order to lead the spirit forward, I ask students to draw from their own experience and to supply their preferred terminology. At the start of the course I invite them to write autobiographical essays about their lives and their longings. I urge students to reflect on their experience, to read poetry, mysticism, and inspirational works. I also ask them to reflect on their experiences in nature, as that appears to be a major site for contemporary reflection. I ask them to use their imagination and to activate their intuition. The results are surprising and sometimes astonishing.

The Intuitive Art of Spirituality

Students have a passion for spirituality. They appear to be at home in it, whereas previous generations were not. It is as if a taboo has lifted in society, and the constraints of secularism are no longer effective. They are less embarrassed to disclose their inner lives, and they seem more prepared to challenge the values and attitudes of science or society, if these stand in the way of a spiritual life:

We cannot see spirituality, therefore it is hard to believe that it exists. Those who work in the field of science believe what they see, so they have no belief in spirituality, whereas those who think with their hearts and have an open mind are open to believing in spirituality (Gorica, 2003).

I doubt whether I could have written like this as an undergraduate. I would have been too embarrassed, and I would not have had enough confidence to invest so much value in the inner life. Developing a relationship with an invisible presence is what students today cultivate in their writings, reflections, and conversations. I think they are spiritually more mature than youth were in my generation. The key to this could be the postmodern condition which allows us to experience more than the surface reality (Caputo, 2001).

The resources of feeling cannot be underestimated. The spiritual life is discerned and kept alive by powerful feelings, and people who are in touch with their feelings are less likely to shut down the spiritual life because it seems absurd to the mind. Feeling says yes, go on the journey, but the intellect worries that the area could be illusory. Here I find a noticeable difference between male and female students.

Women seem more prepared to accept the reality of the invisible world, whereas men are inclined to argue the point, to doubt and prevaricate. This is not true for all men, and it is certainly the case that 'masculinity' itself is changing and becoming more sensitive and receptive (Tacey, 1997).

In matters of spirituality, thinking is not enough, and it will not get us there. There is something more fundamental than thinking which we might call the intelligence of the heart, and our educational system is not good at drawing this out. Feeling and intuition are hugely important and very effective when they work together with thinking. Feeling discerns something more behind our empty centre. Some students report a deep longing that cannot be satiated by love affairs or normal life:

Spirituality to me is a particular kind of longing. This longing is almost an intense physical feeling that haunts me, and makes me ache for something. It is quite elusive, as what I long for is not immediate; I cannot see or touch it. It is a longing for something that is a long way off, and often leads me to melancholy. I recognise that what I long for is impossible to grasp, but the intensity of the feeling is strong. I cannot provide an easy solution to this longing, and recognise that the search will be long and hard. I am hoping that this course will help me understand more clearly what I am longing for (Leah, 2003).

These are deep and profound feelings, and we see here the incredible expectations that some students have about the course.

The spiritual journey calls forth something, and students seem to recognise that this calling forth requires a faith that there is something 'there' to connect to. The reaching out is an act of transformation because in our attempt to reach out the object of our longing is stirred to activity:

Spirituality is like a flower that blooms when it is seen and acknowledged. The more you are able to nourish it, the stronger will your spirituality become. It does not matter how we actually conceptualise spirituality, what matters is that we acknowledge that it exists, and with that acknowledgement comes the support and strength of an inner life (Gorica, 2003).

Postmodern students often sound like mystics of the ancient past. They write, like Meister Eckhart or St John of the Cross, of the importance of imagination in the cultivation of an inner life. We need to 'imagine' another life into existence. This activity is to be distinguished from mere fantasy. The role of imagination is not to invent new worlds and escape into them, but to draw forth something that is already there. This is not a flight from the real but a deepening into the real.

This inward imagining is called intuition by many students, and intuition is a faculty that is vital to the work of soul-making:

Spirituality is a kind of inner knowing. You believe in something that you haven't seen before, but somehow you know it exists (Gorica, 2003).

By its nature, the divine is inexpressible and beyond definition, therefore our spirituality is always an approximation only. Spiritual knowledge is essentially intuitive, an awareness of another reality that often begins to manifest in our lived experience and deep introspection. This knowledge is often due to disillusionment with a purely profane kind of existence. Spirituality is the awakening of innate knowledge, a return to the sacred, and a desire to realise our true potential. It is the search for the hidden self, for our true nature (Joanne, 2003).

Sometimes in my classes, I am not sure who is the student and who is the teacher. I learn so much from what students say, and frequently feel humbled by the level of insight into these sensitive areas.

Teaching in Order to Draw Out What is Already There

If I say I ‘teach’ spirituality, this is not exactly true. I act as a facilitator, not a teacher in the conventional sense. Our ideas of teaching are narrow and often lacking in imagination. We teachers are too concerned with dispensing knowledge and information, and this takes place in an active, not a receptive mode. We need to allow things to unfold, and allow for being and not just doing.

The idea for setting up a course on spirituality came from the students, not from my colleagues or me. For many years, students told me about their spirituality and said that the courses they were studying did not enable it to come forward. Even when I first set up the spirituality course, I was too much in the active mode, dispensing information, and being the caring and providing teacher. But teachers need to be re-educated in the task of caring for the soul and not just the intellect. There is a great amount of spirituality in students’ lives that never gets a chance to express itself, and is not allowed into the curriculum. We teachers need not only to give knowledge but also to receive wisdom, both from our own hearts and from the hearts of our students. There is a kind of unwillingness to engage wisdom, perhaps a deliberate attempt to avoid it, whether through embarrassment or through lack of training in this area.

Certainly, part of our problem is that we work from defective or incomplete models of education. We carry an old prejudice that students are empty vessels and they do not have innate wisdom. I think much education begins with the faulty premise that we are vessels that need to be filled, to be directed, corrected, shaped, and conditioned, all from outside. We forget that the people we are addressing are not just young people in need of information, but souls and spirits who need to *remember* who they are and what they already know.

It this innate, Platonic dimension of education that interests me more as time passes. To facilitate the soul’s remembering, the teacher has to play lightly with his or her authority, and take risks with it, because to some extent the authority of the teacher stands in the way of the intuitive process. Intuition literally means, tuition from within, not from outside. We are good teachers when we dispense accurate

and useful knowledge, but we are even better teachers when we allow a process of tuition to arise from within. The word *education* comes from the Latin 'educare', and means 'to draw out', 'to lead forth'. Spiritual education is about drawing out what is already there.

Finding Tradition in the Soul

The frustrated religious educator who is tired of teaching religion to unreceptive students needs to find a new way of teaching. If young people are turning off, if they are not receptive to religious instruction, we owe it to the spirit and to God to find a new path. This new way is paradoxically the oldest of ways: the Platonic and Socratic path of education, which is based on the metaphysical premise that the soul is already ancient and wise, even though it appears before us in the form of a young student. My motto as a spiritual educator is 'less is more'. The less I emphasise external tradition, the more the students appear to 'remember' the values and attitudes of traditions spurned or forgotten. Some students have never been exposed to any religious tradition in their lives, while a great many have been brought up in a natal faith that has been rejected as they matured into thinking and questioning adults.

In the course of spiritual education, something new and wonderful often occurs to students in relation to their forgotten or rejected traditions. They begin to re-value and re-possess what they have rejected. I will provide a couple of examples. First, from a young man:

It is hard to sway a convinced materialist like myself from his constant scepticism about religious matters, at least I thought it was before this course. But it is terribly hard to continue to oppose the idea of 'spirit' when it is presented in poetry and inspirational writings. Before the course, I blocked out religion as irrelevant to my life, it made no sense to me at all in its conventional, archaic and drab form. But when spirituality is expressed in poetry, passion, and subjectivity, I have to take another look, as these expressions are inspirational and move me in an unexpected way. I now see that emotion and spirit can be included in my world, and I can have such elements without straying from reality (Steven, 2001).

Steven says he is 'hard to sway', but he has been 'moved in an unexpected way'. When an inner connection is made to spirit, the person is able to change his or her views on religion and the outside tradition. People sometimes refer to themselves as hardened materialists or 'atheists', but these tags only refer to their minds, not to their hearts. The heart is always looking for more, and waiting for something 'unexpected' to take place.

I often notice that young men are very concerned about the problem of reality and how best to adjust to it. Steven says, with a good deal of relief, that he is pleased he can have spirit 'without straying from reality'. This is the point I was

making earlier: secularism has conditioned the idea of reality, defining it in its own terms, and excluding spirit from the real. People dare not affirm spirit in case they are becoming unreal to themselves and disloyal to their concept of reality. To affirm spirit is to rebel against the secular model, and men won't do this unless they have some 'scientific' evidence at their disposal. They want to 'meet God in a real and experimental contact with his infinite actuality' (Merton, 1961, p. 37). Received belief is not enough for them. But when spirit is felt as an internal reality, then outside tradition can be given a new meaning. They are able to believe if their hearts have been prepared for the new reality.

What I am suggesting is not new but has been argued by many religious thinkers. The need to ground belief in experience has been indicated by numerous theologians and philosophers, including Tillich and Bultmann on the Protestant side, and Rahner and Lonergan on the Catholic side. Bernard Lonergan wrote: 'The fruit of the truth must grow and mature on the tree of the subject, before it can be plucked and placed in the absolute realm' (1968, p. 3).

This contains the seed of religious renewal. In the past, religion expected us to admire the fruit of truth in the absolute realm, but it must first be grown on the tree of the subject.

My second example comes from a young woman. She had made the typical distinction between personal spirituality and organised religion. She did not share Steven's materialism or disbelief, for she could sense, like so many women, the presence of spirit in her own life. But she could not find much purpose or 'living reality' in the religious traditions. By the end of the course, she admits that she can now see religion in different terms:

Before I started this subject, I was confident in 'bagging' Christianity for the way in which it had failed me. Empty rituals, outmoded morality, and corrupt institutions, etc. Yet as the weeks have passed, I have come to realise that a more sophisticated dialogue is at my disposal. I have discovered that my childish repudiation of the Christian Church revealed a lack of knowledge into the nature, depth and multi-layered appearance of spirituality within religion. I come away with greater respect for my religion of origin, and for the presence of spirituality in what I had thought was a dead and moribund institution (Jenny, 2002).

I must emphasise that I have not taught formal 'religion' at all in this course. Any reflection about the status of religion is coming entirely from the students. I do not promote or criticise religion, but only attend to the personal or subjective experience of the spirit. For many students, religion is first seen as irrelevant, and most students write in the first weeks of the course that religion is an obstacle to their spirituality. By the end of the course, they begin to shift their perspective: religion gets a second viewing, no longer an obstacle, it can become a resource for spirituality.

What delights me about my course is that I am seeing similar processes operating in different faith traditions. For instance, a Jewish student, Malke, said

she had been in Jewish schools in Melbourne as a child, and in adolescence she went to live in Israel where she attended specialist institutions. But the spirituality course with me had been more powerful, she said, in linking her with her native Judaism. Although my course was not about Judaism, or any other religion, she said it had done most of all to connect her with her religious heritage. I found this astonishing, and she wrote two autobiographical essays on this theme.

Islamic students have said the same thing: 'My Islamic teachers taught me about religion, but not about spirituality,' wrote Fatima (2003), an Australian student born in Turkey. 'In this course, I have seen how Allah speaks to me from within, and he is not confined to the outside religion or even to the Koran.' Whether this is heretical or not within the Islamic tradition, I don't know. It certainly would not appear heretical to Sufism, the mystical tradition of Islam.

The spirituality course creates a 'climate of validity' in which various faith positions can be re-experienced and re-affirmed. This process, if sensitively handled, can operate in a truly multi-faith and multi-racial context. If I had come across to the students as more overtly religious, using fully articulated Christian language, for instance, then much less spiritual development would take place, and I would have offended or insulted the majority of my students. The Islamic students would have walked out, and the Jews, whether practising or not, would have followed them. The lapsed Christians, the secular, and the atheists would have protested, and we would have been embroiled in political wrangling and intellectual warfare. By refusing to preach, by looking for a 'generic' language of the human spirit, peace and harmony reigns in the multi-cultural classroom, and yet each individual is entirely free to affirm whatever faith position is pleasing to their soul.

I have to accept that traditionalists from the world's monotheisms do not like the approach I am advocating. They find it too soft, too open, and too ill-defined. I have been formally denounced by religious conservatives for promoting these attitudes, and referred to in condemnatory letters as a 'polytheist'. This has hurt me, but the experiment in spiritual education must go on. I am personally not interested in asserting, along with my forefathers, that one tradition – Christianity – is better or greater than the others. Even less am I interested in arguing whether Protestant, Catholic, or Orthodox is the 'right' version of the Christian story. I am not essentially interested in promoting creed, dogma or denomination. I am too much of a postmodern intellectual to believe in the idea of Absolute Truth, but I do believe in truth with a small 't'. Truth is the spiritual recognition that sets you free.

Concluding Remarks

Today postmodern society is adopting a kind of scientific approach to religious matters. People are saying they would like to believe, but they cannot believe until they have some experimental foundation upon which to base their belief. They

need empirical evidence drawn from their own experience. They go on spiritual journeys, exploring their inner lives and trying to match the inner world to what they discover in the outer world. What is being pursued is a spiritual empiricism, a fascinating mix of science and religion.

One of my students wrote: 'Spirituality is the truth you discover, whereas religion is the truth that is handed to you by tradition' (Kate, 2004). It is apparent that the truth you discover is preferred to the truth passed on by tradition, but these are by no means contradictory. In fact, they are complementary because if religion contains truth, spirituality, working with different methods and ideas, is bound to end up affirming the same or similar truth. It is simply that truth is arrived at differently, in a way that suits the taste and requirements of the postmodern world.

The challenge to religion is to take up a meaningful dialogue with the new spirituality that is felt in today's society. As Karl Rahner wrote, tradition in the past tried to pump religion into people, but the new art is to draw religion out from people (1975). That is a great challenge for a tradition that has understood its role in external or functional ways. It must now recognise that it has to work from the inside out.

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DEFINING SPIRITUALITY IN EDUCATION: A POST-SOVIET PERSPECTIVE

Inga Belousa

Faculty of Education and Management, Daugavpils University, Latvia

Introduction

This article describes the background and context of religious challenges in the contemporary post-Soviet era, provides the theoretical framework of teachers' understanding of spirituality as a dimension of education in Latvia, and integrates it within the perspective of international theories and models of religious and holistic education. It argues that spirituality is an essential concern of teachers' profession and that while spirituality cannot be taught, it can be actualised in education as a learner's inner way towards her/his own truth. This article also proposes that teachers' wisdom regarding spirituality can contribute to reimagining and reconstructing teacher education in Latvia as well as in other post-Soviet countries.

Religious Challenges in Contemporary Post-Soviet Era: Background and Context

The former Soviet Union countries present an unique picture for religious education in the 21st century. They share a common socio-cultural situation that lasted from the end of World War II in 1945 to the early 1990s during which any activity connected with religion was forbidden. In 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed opportunities arose to acknowledge religion publicly and to attend to religious education. This awaking coincides with the observation of Australian educator Tacey (2004) who describes a contemporary society which is 'realising that it has been running on empty, and has to restore itself at a deep, primal source, a source which is beyond humanity and yet paradoxically at the very core of our experience' (p. 1). In former Soviet countries this source has been temporally buried. Nevertheless it was powerful enough to emerge after 50 years

of Soviet occupation. Although purposefully subjected to elimination, it did not perish, and instead helped people to survive the conditions of war, occupation, and genocide.

Joining European Union in May 2004 three former Soviet Union countries – Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia – are witnessing growing processes of globalization and inclusiveness, increased technological development, and serious reevaluation of human potential. These are some of the trends which challenge traditional concepts and descriptions of religion and spirituality and which confront religious educators with unfamiliar reality that goes beyond individualism, dogmatism, indoctrination, and hierarchical structuring of reality, and fosters the development of whole field of religious education. Currently concern for religious education in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia occurs within the context of increased interest in the role of spirituality in society, and its connection with public education.

This article draws on the study (Belousa, 2005) conducted to explore teachers' understanding of spirituality as a dimension of education in Latvia. It focuses on the understanding of religious education that recognises religion as an integral part of public education. Even while religion was forbidden and people were prevented from experiencing religion, a religious spirit remained in teachers' dreams, desires, and was nurtured in various of ways. Teachers have a profound understanding of spirituality, and they tend to implement spirituality in their teaching activity. Accordingly, spirituality is a fundamental dimension of education in its wider meaning that should be considered by teacher educators as a bench-mark of educational activities for teachers-practitioners and teachers-to-be.

Teachers' Understanding of Spirituality

Teachers' deep and profound understanding of spirituality was recognised in the teaching activities connected with the course, 'Spirituality of Pedagogy,' which is a required course in the master's level programs of Daugavpils University entitled *Environmental Education in Pre-school and Primary School, History of Pedagogics, and School Management*. The main objective of this course as described in the syllabus is to acknowledge the connection between spirituality and education: to explore its nature, role, and diversity, to elicit its personal understanding, and to design practical implications for its implementation in educational institutions. The course provides teachers with a forum to reflect on and deepen their experience of teaching. The teachers' deep involvement in discussions of spirituality and education suggests that this issue is significant for them (Belousa, 2000; 2002; 2003). There is often anger about the lack of importance this issue had in educational philosophy and practice during Soviet times. Also, there is a sense of relief and openness to the current possibility of addressing the spiritual dimension of education.

Since 'spirituality is grounded not in doctrine or dogma, but in the place where all debates are resolved, where everyone and everything is equal, the place from which all life came' (Palmer, 1998b, p. x), the experience of teachers was used as the

primary source of information. To generate a theoretical framework of spirituality as a dimension of education the grounded theory methodology (Glasser, 1978; Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was employed.

It was discovered that spirituality as a dimension of education is viewed by teachers as an inner way towards the truth that integrates three typical characteristics of the nature of spirituality within education – *an essential element of human reality*, *the inborn drive to learn*, and *an inclination to rise above*. Accordingly, spirituality in education is a constant process of a person's inner development and growth, of rediscovery of spirituality as a core of human nature, following the inborn drive to learn, and rising above everyday reality. The rise above one's limits of education and socialization leads to reconsidering assumptions about the core of one's own being. A person immerses oneself in the heart's education by choosing the path of self-knowledge and self-realisation, communal experience, and holistically participates in education in order to be faithful to the inborn drive to learn. These paths suggest that spirituality in education is not realised through application of certain strategies. Rather, the paths cited lead to rising above what is learned and gaining new or reconstructed understanding and experience. In so doing, the process provides one with the possibility of being aware of one's own reality, of transcending the self, and reaching the fullness of one's potential. Therefore, spirituality in education can never be completed because every moment of a human life has the potential for new learning experiences. This process of journeying towards the truth occurs within a particular context, which depends on particular conditions and on the quality of personal involvement.

The spiritual dimension of education refers to one's inner way towards the truth that embodies (a) the acceptance of spirituality as an essential element of human nature; (b) the following of one's inborn drive to learn; and (c) the experience of rising above one's inner resources. Spirituality in education is a dynamic, continuous, and interrelated process through which a person yearns to reach the fullness of one's human condition. The dynamics of spirituality nurture a developmental life journey that is an inner way to truth. Thus, spirituality is deeply embedded in the human condition, while likewise transforming and transcending it.

Spirituality: An Essential Concern of Teacher's Profession

As highlighted earlier, spirituality is an essential concern of the teacher's profession which goes beyond imparting knowledge and skills. Rather, teaching is about creating a learning environment that opens up possibilities for students to acknowledge the spiritual dimension of their lives. All the educational content is considered to be the possible means which reveal the spiritual dimension of reality. Learning, then, is a process in which students are involved in discovering themselves in relation to others, to their surrounding environment, and to the ultimate. Therefore, spirituality is an inherent issue of education.

Access to the spiritual dimension is the core of the teachers' profession. All teachers have the ability to be aware of the spiritual dimension of education. By choosing to be a teacher, teachers follow the call to nurture the inner lives of their students. Some teachers are directly aware of the nature of this call and others intuitively follow it. Spirituality as a professional concern suggests that the profession of teaching is a vocation and not a routine job, as asserted by Durka (1995; 2002), Harris (1987; 1988), Kessler (2000), Miller (1994; 2000), O'Reilley (1998), Palmer (1983; 1998a) to mention but a few.

Spirituality is an inner potential that can be acknowledged, trusted, and nourished alongside the ongoing development of professional teaching competencies. Teachers must be true to themselves and exhibit congruency in their words and deeds so that there is a balance between their inner and outer world. They need to trust in themselves and in what they are doing in order to understand their students and to foster their inner development. Listening, openness, curiosity, and being fully present to the other are some other qualities that characterise the inner wisdom of teachers' in the educational process. Teachers must rise above a mundane view of reality and see the bigger picture. When spirituality is neglected or denied as a component of the educational process, teachers can experience frustration, inner imbalance, and dissatisfaction with their own professional activity. However, a positive attitude towards their profession promotes success, and should be celebrated, as emphasised by Durka (2002) and Harris (1987; 1988; 1995; 1996).

All teachers have the potential to implement spirituality in the educational process. It can be done regardless of the subjects taught, age groups, personality, interests, or abilities of their students, and it can be learned by anyone who teaches, as suggested by hooks (1994). Spirituality in education can be fostered by organising student-centred learning and providing integrative opportunities for their holistic involvement in the educational process. Teachers' attempts can be successful when they realise that their role is to promote and facilitate the learning process of students through promoting different ways of knowing and acknowledging students as active discoverers and creators of knowledge. Teachers' educational activity should extend beyond the limits of school as the only or the main educational establishment to interconnect family, school, and society. Such a common goal and interrelated educational activities will nourish the spirituality of learners.

Spirituality, when recognised in education, inspires and empowers teachers. It is the primary energy of teachers' vocation, as asserted by Palmer (1998a), a premise for being passionate about teaching (Nash, 2001; 2002), and, as argued by Conti (2002), the root of insight that transforms education into a sacramental and sacred act. Thus, spirituality is a vital key to teachers' professional success.

Discussion about spirituality as an essential concern of teacher's profession contributes to the vast number of studies which consider the impact of teachers' professional behavior, thinking, values, beliefs, and lived experiences on their professional concerns, processes, and outcomes. It confirms the significance of an unified and holistic understanding of a teacher's personality and the influence of one's inner concerns on professional activity.

Spirituality in Education

The interconnectedness of spirituality and education in terms of spiritual intelligence (Sinetar, 2000; Zohar & Marshall, 2000) and literacy (Wright, 2000), spiritual curriculum (Llewellyn, 1998; Miller, 2000), spiritual teaching (Kessler, 2000), nurture and awakening (Moffett, 1994; Nakagawa, 2000) through education from early childhood (Coles, 1990; Hart, 2003; Hay & Nye, 1998) to adult education (English, 2000; English et al., 2003; Tisdell, 2003; Vella, 2000; Zinn, 1997) is widely discussed in the field of education from a philosophical point of view. Works on spirituality in education are more recent. What it means to be human from a postmodernist viewpoint (Griffin, 1988; 1990; King, 1998; 2001) is a key aspect of spirituality as an educational dimension. Spirituality in education requires a new paradigm of thinking or a new style of consciousness, as claimed by Tacey (2004). The notion of spirituality as the human quest for meaning and truth denotes is a cross-curricular issue in the educational process which provides an impetus for teachers to reorient *from* activities that attach spirituality to values, morality, ethics, or affectivity *to* activities which acknowledge spirituality as a universal human reality that embraces ultimate elements and ensures a subjective relationship with the things that are encountered. Such acknowledgement of spirituality as a dimension of education provides an unique perspective of education consistent with ideas radically different from the traditional one. It is described in recent educational writings as the call for reimagining and reconstructing of education. For example, Tacey (2004) claims that to fosters spirituality in education it is necessary to evaluate the current understanding and process of education in general. Thus, not only are new methods, strategies, or course books needed but a new paradigm of thinking and teaching as well to ensure that spirituality is approachable for both religious believers and unbelievers (Wright, 2000). So, spirituality is neither a theme or a study course in the school curriculum nor a final outcome that can be learned. Therefore it cannot be added to education as one of its parts, as cautioned by Silkalns (2001). This understanding of spirituality implies an evolving process that acknowledges the human quest for meaning, self-actualisation, and application of ultimate values to daily life. Spirituality in education is a dimension that should be recognised as the core of the educational process.

Inner Way Towards the Truth

Spirituality in education as the *Inner Way* is a metaphor for a journey that implies a process of growth and development of one's inner world. It is a process of following one's inborn drive to learn and the inclination to rise beyond that which is habitual. There is a certain dynamic between these steps which suggests a continuous interplay between them. When spirituality is acknowledged as the core of human reality, the inborn drive to learn serves to expand one's inner horizon. And when a critical amount of learning is reached, the structure of the inner horizon is transformed according to new and advanced patterns. The transformed inner reality then calls for repeated acknowledgement of the spiritual core of human reality that

is based on the newly shaped horizon. Thus, the inner way is truly an everlasting circling or spiraling that implies several returns to the visited positions but always in a new and broader quality.

The *Truth* in the notion of education as a spiritual journey is also a metaphor. It incorporates existential questions about one's life. These questions help to distinguish the notion of the fundamental meaning and purpose of life. When these questions are approached, learners are able to recognise that the spiritual dimension is an essential aspect of human reality. The truth also provides a possibility to discern that spirituality implies ultimate qualities and their embodiment within particular conditions. This means that the ultimate core of spirituality is both common or constant, and 'translated' or dependent on the particular socio-cultural situation (Tisdell, 2003). To probe the ultimate core of spirituality requires stepping back from one's own reality, looking at the habitual conditions from aside, contrasting them with other different embodiments of the truth, and exploring the things that are common. As discussed in Wright's (2000) model of critical spiritual education such an activity requires critical skills of 'reading' spirituality as the content of human reality and its contextual expressions. Clearly, then, spirituality should be recognised as a dimension of education.

The Nature of a Person's Inner Way

The nature of a person's inner way is constant and processive. It implies moving forward towards discovering and re-discovering the truth according to the newly attained patterns of knowing. Its notion of growth, change, and development suggests the embeddedness of spirituality in the field of education. It can be pictured as journeying deeper and as discovering new and previously unrecognised layers of the truth about self, others, the surrounding world, and the ultimate.

This quest for the inner dimension of life is inborn and natural, as seen reflected in young children. Yet, the traditional approach to education is rather oblivious to the quest for one's inner core. It overshadows the inner quest and submerges it. What is needed is an holistic approach that recognises spirituality as a universal human reality which is affected by the particular socio-cultural situation which can either foster its process or distort it. Education which fosters students' spiritual literacy is crucial.

The process of discovery and re-discovery of the truth has existential, transformative, and transcendental manifestations. The *existential manifestation* of a person's inner journey is based on the quest for the core of one's existence, as Miller (1993a; 1993b; 1994; 2000) suggests, a need to bring soul and the sacred into education; or, as Moffett (1994) claims, the necessity to spiritualise education. It has the potential to open up the ultimate dimension, to connect each person with the ultimate source and with animate and inanimate nature. This is consistent with the observation of Tacey (2004) that spiritual education should be existential rather than creedal, and of Wright (2000) that this type of education has to move 'beyond a mundane level to grapple with issues surrounding the fundamental meaning and

purpose of life' (p. 12). So, too, O'Reilley (1998) invites her readers 'to frame the central questions of our discipline as spiritual questions, and to deal with them in the light of our spiritual understanding' (p. 2). This quest introduces a sacramental perspective where everybody and everything is pictured in the light of its meaning and relationship with others. It reveals that the ultimate is an incarnate reality, ever present in the mundane. It helps one to perceive the nature of a human person as multidimensional and holistic.

Spiritual teaching and learning enables transformation. The *transformative manifestation* of the inner journey implies recognition and response to one's inborn drive to learn which can potentially expand the inner horizon and nurtures different skills and abilities of a person. This is consistent with Tacey's (2004) observation that spiritual education is transformative, and with Palmer's (1983) assertion that spiritually attuned teaching has transformative power. It also supports Mezirow's (1994; 2000) theory of transformative learning. The journey to transformative manifestation depends on each person's style and preference. Attention to self-reflection, relationships, ethics, aesthetics, religion, nature are some possible choices which flow from this focus of life which is abundant with differences, richness, and diversity. Thus, the transformative drive enriches the quality of human life.

The *transcendental manifestation* of the inner journey towards the truth describes the inclination of a human person to rise above habitual patterns. It challenges the habitual way of thinking and living because it opens up new horizons where familiar things can be seen in a different light. Such ideas are shared by Palmer (1983) who suggests that traditional education lacks the transcendental aspect that is crucially needed for the spiritual development of students and teachers; by hooks (1994) that education as an inner journey enables transgression – 'a movement against and beyond boundaries' (p. 12); and by Wilber (1997; 1999; 2000) that a deeper, vertical movement of changes is really the transcendence of the self. Thus, new possibilities are discovered because inner limits are expanded and former patterns of thinking and living are questioned. Often one comes to the recognition that everybody and everything has one and the same core. This is the wisdom of heart which Wright (2000) refers to as spiritual literacy.

In general, the existential, transformative, and transcendental manifestations of a person's inner way comprise a vision of how to live a fully human life. All three aspects are dynamically interrelated in a circle or spiral-like process that moves according to each person's rhythm.

Teaching Spirituality

Teaching Spirituality is a metaphor that points to the professional activity of teachers in a spiritually attuned educational process. This metaphorical phrase emphasises teachers' activity in a general but not literal way. As revealed in recent findings, spirituality cannot be taught; it can rather be awakened, nurtured, and nourished. Teaching spirituality is a concept regarded by Harris (1988) as a religious, a sacramental, and a holy act. This finding is closely related to recent

educational studies and discourse about practical implications of religious education (for example, Harris, 1987; 1988), and holistic education (for example, Miller, 1994; 2000; Moffett, 1994; Kessler, 2000; Palmer, 1983; 1998a) which regard education as something more than the sum of techniques, strategies, methods, and content-knowledge. Thus, the process of teaching spirituality is possible by enhancing students' self-understanding of their inner world based on their perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, as suggested by London et al. (2004). Such a teaching process acknowledges dialogical, reflective, creative, exploratory, interactive, cooperative approaches to learning; practices of openness; attentiveness to experience; and sensitivity to the world. It is related to Moore's (1998) notion of organic teaching or the art of teaching from the heart. According to Palmer (1998a), such teaching from within goes beyond techniques and strategies. Likewise, according to Rogers (1989), it is the acknowledgement of the Spirit who is the primary teacher. Such teaching nurtures the spiritual nature of learners. It attempts to ensure learning that is meaningful and significant, as observed by Rogers (1969). It extends institutional borders and reaches beyond the school as the only or the main place where education happens.

Thus, teaching spirituality is not based on activities of instruction. Rather, it is a journey in which new learnings, experiences, skills, attitudes, and responses are created, and in which teachers also are students, and students also are teachers. They both are co-creators of their inner realities, and companions on the spiritual journey.

As well, metaphor of teaching spirituality supports ideas discussed by Postlethwaite (2003) concerning sacred-centred pedagogy in which a teacher is a healer, mentor, and gardener, and where teaching is an organic process that requires the acknowledgement of wholeness, love, orientation to the other, relationship, process orientation, centring, presence and openness. It also acknowledges the communal dimension described by Renteria (2001) which asserts that such teaching builds spiritual community by contributing as 'love providing', connecting as 'love inviting', and guiding as 'love shepherding'. This metaphor is also consistent with Kirk's (2000) ideas about education when he writes of the necessity to recover wholeness, to discuss the meaning and value of human life, and to introduce holistic ways of knowing – intuition, imagination, and empathy – in the educational process. And finally, it is consistent with Llewellyn's (1998) ideas about spirituality in education as being replete with transformative possibilities.

The spiritual dimension of education allows students to engage in activities to know themselves and their true nature, not only with their mind but also through feelings and imagination, to be aware of and to develop their own potential, and to actualise themselves in their particular educational environment. Similarly, it supports the significance of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983; 1993), and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; 1998) in education. It confirms that any theme, any study course can be taught spiritually, and that it is not the course that makes the difference but rather the vision, thinking, and teaching of each teacher. This finding suggests that there are conceptual and experiential differences among

traditional (norm-oriented), modern (from atomistic/individualistic to romantic) and postmodern (spiritual, sustainable, holistic) education, and highlights the need for a new paradigm of thinking that is open to spirituality as a dimension of education.

Spirituality in Reimagining and Reconstructing Teacher Education in Latvia

When teachers shared their wisdom during the interviews, they also emphasised their uneasiness, even discomfort in speaking about the spiritual in education with students, parents, or colleagues. They noted their lack of experience in sharing with colleagues as well as the absence of examples of how other teachers implement spirituality in education. According to Wright (2000) the reason why so many teachers are not comfortable with spiritual education is 'not because they view issues as being inappropriate with classroom investigation, but because they feel the lack of the training, insight, knowledge and skills necessary for them to do a professional job' (p. 94). This all suggests that teachers should be provided with opportunities to obtain this experience during their professional or academic studies.

Teacher education has a crucial role in building competency not only in methodology of teaching but also in informing the philosophy of education. The theoretical framework of spirituality as an issue of education points to the educational changes needed in Latvia. There are three major facets that should be introduced in teacher education to reconstruct it according to spiritual principles. The first facet is the *notion of paradox*. Paradox implies an image that can assist teachers in the process of educational changes by revealing how the spiritual dimension is present in education. The second facet is *spiritual literacy*. This facet attempts to go beyond the prescribed curriculum and acknowledges spirituality as a cross-curricular issue in teacher training and education programs. The third facet is *experiential spirituality*. It acknowledges the need to provide practical activities in teacher education programs to nourish teachers' own spirituality. These facets are especially grounded in the literature of religious and holistic education.

It follows that spirituality in teacher education should not be implemented as a theory 'from above.' Rather, in their teacher preparation classes, educators should introduce the image of paradox, the value of spiritual literacy, and spiritual activities which acknowledge their students teachers' inner journey. These foci will nurture diverse ways of knowing, acting, and responding as teachers of religious education.

Image of Paradox

Educational philosophy is changing in Latvia. However, the shift in education from norm-orientation to person-orientation (Beļickis, 1995) is not easy for teachers because it requires the letting go of earlier notions and the welcoming of new

challenges. In this difficult period metaphors and images can be crucial guides, mainsprings, or even messengers of changes. Paradox is one such metaphor which embraces some of the most significant complexities and potentials of education. Paradox can provide a positive image of the state of being in-between and an integration or synthesis of two seemingly incompatible opposites. The image of paradox embodies the encouragement teachers need to face changes since, as Harris (2001) puts it, 'a paradox is an apparent contradiction. ...To create security, we must accept the insecurity that uncertainty brings. To feel comfortable about our future, we must accept the discomfort of learning new skills. Stability ...or peace of mind comes only from changing' (p. 23). Thus, the image of paradox can be used to reimage religious education and to assist teachers' professional growth in this period of change.

In educational discourse paradox is explored as essentially spiritual, for it integrates contradictory polarities, implies 'an ability to see the big picture without missing the details' (Daloiz et al., 1996, pp. 122–123), and envisions the truth as 'a paradoxical joining of apparent opposites' (Palmer, 1998a, p. 62). In discussing paradox, Harris (2001) highlights three main components of security in the contemporary world: the ability to learn continually, the ability to change, and the ability to cope with uncertainty. Paradoxically, these are the main fears of learning often experienced by teachers (p. 22). To make these fears into agents of changes, students should face them while in teacher education programs.

The paradoxical nature of teachers' inner journeys can also be described as an integration of opposites: a teacher as a learner, spirituality as integrated in the secular, 'the realities which limit us are the realities which sustain us' (Moran, 1979, p. 71) to mention but a few. Also, the notion of paradox symbolises the intangibility of the spiritual dimension of education.

The principle of paradox in teacher education should be based on philosophy that acknowledges diverse possibilities, responsible choices, and openness to learn from one's own experience. Paradox in teacher education requires a holistic approach to teaching where balance and interconnectedness of different ways of knowing are utilised, such as activities which foster dialogical, reflective, creative, exploratory and interactive participation.

The paradoxical aspect of education offers a symbol for teachers that can help them to appreciate and adapt to change, uncertainty, instability, even discomfort in education, and to nurture their own inner professional journey in a way that welcomes patience, courage, tolerance, compassion. As Palmer et al. (2001) sum it up, 'authentic education is full of such paradoxes, if we have eyes to see, for it involves the death of old ideas and assumptions and the emergence of new forms of knowing and being in the world' (p. 135).

These various notions of the paradoxical nature of education provide a philosophical base for reimagining teacher education in Latvia and for enabling it to be more open, flexible, and creative.

Spiritual Literacy: Spirituality as a Cross-Curricular Issue

Teacher education of its nature is interdisciplinary. It implies the need to go beyond the subject matter, to acknowledge the spiritual dimension of any course of study, and to nurture critical understanding of spirituality within teacher training and education. This is consistent with Wright's (2004) claim that a critical approach towards spiritual education acknowledges and nourishes spiritual literacy (p. 214). Thus, for programs of teacher education spiritual literacy is a central issue.

Spiritual literacy is not a separate theme or a course of study. Rather it is a cross-curricular issue which addresses metaphysical assumptions about the nature of the animate, inanimate, and ultimate reality, and the competency to nourish one's own and students' inner journey in the light of these assumptions. These assumptions should reflect the increasing plurality of beliefs and experiences of a person's inner journey; as well as concerns about its inner dimension, and the diversity and interconnectedness of reality. Such an interdisciplinary understanding of spirituality is consistent with the post-modern understanding of the human person, as discussed by Griffin (1988; 1990) and King (1998; 2001).

Spiritual literacy helps a person to acknowledge and maintain a relationship with the self, others, environment, natural world, and the ultimate. It gives teachers the necessary skills to 'read' the ultimate core of spirituality, its embodiment, and meaning in a particular socio-cultural situation. Spiritual literacy can help this emerging voice to go beyond the personal, bringing a critical and holistic perspective to the learner. It has the potential to bring a critical and holistic perspective on the development of each student and society in general. Spiritual literacy is the fundamental knowledge that 'always eludes complete fulfillment but never ceases to beckon,' as suggested by Durka (2002, p. 80). For her it implies a basic hunger for goodness and wisdom of how to live well. Therefore, spiritual literacy allows one to live a more fulfilling life because it provides a spiritual perspective of better opportunities, broader meaning, and expanded capacities to enjoy the present and to create a better future. For teachers such development helps to 'empower students to take responsibility for their spiritual lives by cultivating appropriate levels of religious [spiritual] literacy' (Wright, 2004, p. ix).

To foster spiritual literacy in their own study courses, teacher educators should address themes which are concerned with the flourishing of human life. This includes showing how the themes they are teaching are related to the spiritual dimension of human life, and providing a variety of strategies for helping students to make and reflect on these connections. Developmental, cultural, and historical perspectives ensure openness towards personal translation of different issues of spiritual literacy and ensure the critical involvement of students. Recognition of these perspectives can keep teachers from inculcating one particular religious or cultural ideology in their teaching.

This process requires tolerance of ambiguity. As Wright (2004) points out, acknowledgement of ambiguous spiritual and religious experiences 'need not result in a relativistic counsel of despair. On the contrary, such ambiguity should function as an intellectual and spiritual driver of the pedagogic process, spurring the struggle

for religious literacy' (p. 221). The spiritually literate teacher would be able to read and understand this pluralistic reality which, according to Wright, is necessary to avoid a confessional agenda. Thus, while spiritual literacy requires the skills of critical thinking, it does not provide a fixed body of knowledge although the development of knowledge and understanding is a crucial ingredient (Jackson, 2004, pp. 17–18). This aspect of teacher training and education includes the well-known approach of *learning about*, and should be interconnected with another approach – *learning from* (Wright, 2004, pp. 183–190) so as to avoid compartmentalization.

To reconstruct teacher education according to life-giving principles, spiritual literacy is crucially needed for teachers in post-Soviet countries. For example, after a long period of Soviet occupation (1945–1991), religion is now included as a subject in the school curriculum of Latvia. Spiritual literacy would help teachers to invite the common ground and denominational uniqueness of religious beliefs of students in classrooms and to educate their students' tolerant attitude towards spiritual diversity. To do that, all teachers should be spiritually literate, and the development of mastery of this professional skill should be provided in the programs of teacher education and training.

Experiential Spirituality: A Practice of Nourishment of Teachers' Inner Journey

The socio-cultural situation plays a great role in development of teachers' inner world. But the impact of socio-cultural situation can also be destructive, as pointed out by teachers who claimed that the Soviet denial of spirituality still has an impact on the educational philosophy of many teachers in Latvia. Thus, the intentional practice of nourishing teachers' inner journey should be included in the programs of teacher training and education. All teachers need inner work as much as outer work to attain true professional competency. The experience of their own inner development can connect teachers with the inner development of their students and provide practical knowledge to nurture their students' spirituality. Miller (2000) argues that incorporation of the spiritual in education nourishes the inner journey of both students and teachers. According to Palmer (1998a), engagement in spiritual practice can lead teachers towards the core of their own spirituality while influencing their mastery of the subject and their relationship with their students. Similarly, Flake (2000) reiterates that 'it is only when we teachers are in touch with our own transformational processes that we can create learning environments which become the sites of positive transformation for others' (p. 285).

In response to Palmer's (1998a) question: 'How can educational institutions sustain and deepen the selfhood from which good teaching comes' (p. 4), it is proposed that the enhancement of teachers' inner journey could be offered as a study course; a practicum where spiritual journey can be awakened and nourished. As Miller (2000) observed, the nourishment of teachers' inner journey 'requires a radically different approach to professional development. Generally, professional development has focused on: teaching strategies, classroom management skills, the

implementation of new curriculum and student assessment policies. Of course, many of these activities are important but ultimately they occur within the framework of soul' (p. 121).

Miller's notion of the inner life curriculum is based on the practice of contemplation. It comprises the following elements: meditation, visualization, working with dreams, and journal writing. Horwitz (2000) also suggests what she calls the tools for the inner journey, such as freewriting, listening with reverence, ritual, and silence. There are several programs that support the nourishment of the spiritual life of teachers. For example, Palmer's *Courage to Teach* program (Conti, 2002; Palmer et al., 2001) and Kessler's *Soul of Education Passages* program (Conti, 2002) are among those which suggest different ways of involvement in teachers' inner journey. Elkins (1998) and Johnson (1999) also suggest several ways to approach spirituality as an universal human reality. However, it is not necessary to propose a particular kind or number of activities that nourish the inner life of a teacher. How to plan and organise this practice can be left to the directors of each study program. What is more important is to acknowledge the necessity of experiential spirituality and to provide such kind of practice in teacher education programs.

Spiritual practice will have benefits beyond the classroom because, as Palmer et al. (2001) put it: 'Teachers who cultivate their identity and integrity, their selfhood, will become both better teachers and more effective agents of institutional change' (p. 145). Although teacher education cannot claim to be 'a place for extensive self-disclosure but simply a place where we [teachers] can, on occasion, drop the role of teacher and simply be a human being,' it is nevertheless true that 'the more we [teachers] can succeed in this task the more satisfying our job becomes as we [teachers] find we can more deeply connect to our students' (Miller, 2000, p. 74).

Conclusion

The framework presented here emphasises the interrelation between education and religion. It broadens the understanding of both education and religion. Spirituality transforms education to a life-long journey towards the truth which opens up deep and personal questions that lie hidden beneath the daily concerns of educational institutions. Since this journey is a constitutive aspect of education it should be a part of any study course and should be a concern of each teacher. This framework provides the possibility of acknowledging the interrelation between education and religion with spirituality as the bridge between them. In a sense, spirituality cannot be taught, because it is a given human reality, but it can be experienced and nurtured. Educators can nourish spirituality of a learner by the modeling of their own character and behavior, and by celebrating their own life and the lives of students as sacred. Teachers' shared praxis and continuing education should be supported. Also, close connection between schools, institutions of teacher education, and educational policy is recommended. Educational policy makers are encouraged to acknowledge the contribution of teachers' wisdom

to the formation of educational policy. Contemporary pluralist society provides a challenging educational environment. Globalization affects family, school and society. Teachers must be able to read the broad and paradoxical understanding of spirituality and incorporate it in their unique educational settings.

Clearly, the spiritual is not something to be added to education. Spirituality is not a recipe to reach profane goals or even a guarantee to create a harmonious personality (Silkalns, 2001, p. 26). Rather it is an invigorating quality of the whole human organism. Reimagining and reconstructing education begins with teacher. The words of Palmer (1998a) serve to remind as well: 'In our rush to reform education, we have forgotten a simple truth: reform will never be achieved by renewing appropriations, restructuring schools, rewriting curricula, and revising texts if we continue to demean and dishearten the human resource called teacher on whom so much depends' (p. 3).

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SANKOFA: AN INHERENTLY RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF AFRICAN EDUCATION

Roseanne McDougall

LaSalle University in Philadelphia, USA

Introduction

In recent years new emphasis has been placed upon the role and importance of African traditional (indigenous) education and its special place in the curriculum. This emphasis is demonstrated by highlighting how the concept of African traditional education became the focal point in a course in educational philosophy taught in Jos, Nigeria in August of the years 2000 and 2002. The essay explores three areas: context, texts, and life-texts. This essay addresses African traditional education for what it is, namely, a deeply religious component in the formation of the African person and community. The essay argues in favor of maintaining the place of the traditions in present day African education. The terms African traditional education and African indigenous education are used synonymously.

The essay supports the work of other African philosophers of education who have written in favor of a distinctively African form of philosophy of education. For Africans, formal courses in philosophy of education should be centred upon African wisdom rather than adapted from Western models, although Western models do have a place in these courses.

It should be kept in mind that the author of this essay is an expatriate. There is far more to Sankofa than is portrayed in these pages. Hence, it is critical that would be African philosophers of education be trained in such a manner that they can more fully develop the concept of Sankofa than is expressed here (Njoroge & Benaars, 1986). This chapter argues in favor of a traditionally African philosophy of education. It is written with deep respect for the people and culture of Africa, from which the world has much to learn.

Context, part one, describes the circumstances and setting in which the course in educational philosophy is taught. Texts, part two, illustrates the major areas of course content with specific reference to oral, written, and visual texts. The concept

of Sankofa is introduced; it runs as a theme throughout the course. Life-texts, part three, demonstrates student integration of Sankofa by describing some responses and observations regarding the role of African traditional education in the curriculum.

Context

In the spring of 1997 a small international team was entrusted with the task of designing and implementing 'Education for Ministry,' an enrichment programme for Ghanaian and Nigerian Catholic sisters and lay women and men in West Africa. The West Africans serve as catechists, teachers, church workers, nurses and social workers among their own people and in surrounding Chad and Cameroon.

The purpose of the 'Education for Ministry' programme is to provide a series of courses which together provide theological, philosophical, socio-economic, and psychological foundations for young adult Africans engaged in ministry in West Africa. Among the courses offered over a series of four summers are: Ethics & Moral Theology, Educational Philosophy, The New Testament, Church & Sacraments, Women in the Church, Faith & Justice, Islamic Studies, Developmental Psychology, and Sexuality & the Human Person.

The foundational courses strengthen ministerial background and complement the professional education offered at the universities. This cluster of courses broadens and enhances the professional background required by the students who engage in various church and educational services.

'Education for Ministry' is sponsored by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, a small international congregation of women religious in the Catholic Church. The Society, through its Irish, English, French and American members, has exercised a missionary presence in West Africa since 1930. There were approximately 80 Ghanaian or Nigerian members of the Society living and working in West Africa in 1997. By 2005, the number had grown to about 100. While nearly all of the expatriate sisters have either died or retired in their home countries, the newest and youngest African members of the Society are asking for the same education which had formed the missionaries they so admired. They also want to share the education they are receiving with members of other religious congregations in Africa and with their lay co-workers in churches, schools, hospitals and social centres. While the number of young adult student participants in the program at any one time, is relatively small (usually 25–30 people), their interests are varied and their influence is far reaching due to the strong oral culture among the people of West Africa.

Helen Costigane, a Scottish member of the Society living in England, initially conceived the concept of 'Education for Ministry.' Subsequently both Catholic and Protestant groups serving in West Africa strongly affirmed both its validity and the need for its implementation. The students were very eager to learn, so much so that when the possibility of earning academic credit was found to be impossible, they freely committed themselves to diligent study, reading and writing, as if they were completing a series of credit courses.

The program was launched during the summer of 1998. The Educational Philosophy course was taught in the summer of 2000, and again in the summer of 2002 during the second cycle. The key question which undergirded curriculum planning for the course was: How does an expatriate professor design and implement a curriculum in Educational Philosophy, an essentially Western, first world, European and American discipline, so that it can be a meaningful course with an appropriate cultural fit in West Africa?

African educational philosophers had also raised similar questions. They found significant gaps between the content of the typical (Western) Educational Philosophy course, as it was taught in Africa in the 1980s, and the real-life pertinent themes and issues in African educational philosophy. There was a serious absence of 'African oriented material' (Njoroge & Benaars, 1986, pp. xiii-xiv, 88-100).

The Educational Philosophy course taught at Jos attempted to address the gaps, despite the fact that there was some irony involved; the professor was not African! The choice and use of texts was critical to the curriculum.

Texts

A set of morning lectures built around *Philosophy and Education in Africa* by Njoroge & Benaars (1986) constitutes the basis and structure of the course. The lectures are supplemented by the reading and afternoon discussions of Tedla's (1995) *Sankofa: African Thought and Education* and Ngugi's (1965) *The River Between*. In addition, students who wish to do so may visit the Jos Museum or they may view and discuss three films: *Africa: A History Denied* (1995), *Female Circumcision: Human Rites* (1998), and *Dark Passages: The Atlantic Slave Trade* (1997). While participation in these enrichment activities is optional, every student is present. Finally, students develop an integrating course project (life-text) which interprets the significance of ideas and insights related to the course. A summary of some salient points in the textual material follows:

Three pertinent questions are explored with students fairly early in the undergraduate course in educational philosophy: First, what is meant by 'educational philosophy?' Second, how has educational thought developed in Africa? Third, what is meant by philosophy of education in Africa?

African educational philosophy and thinking has, in fact, developed along three major tracks. Unfortunately, the values of the original, thoroughly African tradition have been regrettably overlooked, both historically over the last several centuries and in the present. In addition, the Western world, for the most part, is largely ignorant of the Muslim tradition in African education. Western ignorance stems from historical and cultural differences between Islam and the West. Unfortunately the African continent has become a setting in which some of these differences have been activated, even to the point of bloodshed. At the same time, some Western

educational philosophers (Meijer, 2002, 2006) today are exploring the Muslim points of departure in education. Students of African educational philosophy will some day benefit from the fruits of their labors. The Western tradition in African education entered Africa with European colonisers. While ostensibly designed to improve the lot of the African people, Western traditions in education have also been instrumental in the subjugation of Africans.

Paradoxically, traditional African education is the most poorly appreciated tradition on the contemporary scene. The concept of philosophy of education in Africa existed long before the Western world's development of the field. African traditional customs were transmitted by word of mouth down through generations and long before the development of written Western literature on the philosophy of education. It is erroneous to hold that African traditions are of lesser value because they did not employ the phrase 'philosophy of education' or because they were oral rather than written traditions. It is time for Africans to reclaim the place of their traditions in education on the world stage of the development and value of educational philosophy. This is particularly true with respect to the importance the earliest traditions in education hold for the African people.

The term 'philosophy of education' in Africa connotes not only the earliest traditions, but also contemporary developments in education with special emphasis upon political speeches and governmental committee reports. The present day philosopher of education needs to try to hold both ancient and new meanings in the balance (Njoroge & Benaars, 1986, pp. 35–82).

Historically, African educational thought has developed in rich and varied ways. The traditions in African education predate the Muslim and Western colonising traditions in education. Through classroom lecture and reading, the undergraduate has the opportunity to explore each of these three major traditions in African education. Students find that the history provides them with a sense of perspective. They are most particularly interested in their respective ancient tribal traditions. They also find descriptions of more recent types of educational thought to be helpful, as they are often knowledgeable about a variety of views both conservative and radical.

African philosophy of education in the formal sense, as the Western world understands it with written literature, began in the early 1960s and so it is relatively young on the continent. By the 1980s J. Akinpelu (Nigeria) had written *An introduction to the philosophy of education* (1981). Later in the 1980s, Njoroge and Benaars (Kenya, 1986) developed a synthesis based upon their analysis of methods of academic philosophy, approaches to philosophy of education, and trends in African philosophy. Initially, they proposed and explained four models of African philosophy of education derived as much from the literature as from their own work:

'Ethno-philosophy of African Education' is concerned with traditional educational thought in Africa. The philosopher employs speculative reflection, in order to derive implications for African educational thought and practice (Wandira, 1972; Ocitti, 1973).

'Phenomenology of African education' describes and explains the individual and collective examples or cases (phenomena) of African education through existential philosophical reflection and language (Freire, 1972; Ocaya-Lakidi, 1980; Nyerere, 1980; Erny, 1973; 1981).

'Philosophical critique of African education' focuses on issues found in critical pedagogy, political philosophy and social philosophy (Machel, 1974; Cabral, 1975).

'Philosophical analysis of African education' analyses educational thought in Africa as it is expressed in educational policies, documents, syllabi and practices (Njoroge & Benaars, 1986).

The synthesis developed by Njoroge and Benaars constitutes a foundational framework upon which African philosophy of education may be built. Having developed this synthesis, these educational philosophers then argue in favour of a dynamic existential approach to the study of African educational philosophy which incorporates elements of analysis and critique (Njoroge & Benaars, 1986, pp. 89–96).

While class lectures revolve around Njoroge's and Benaars' development of a distinctively African educational philosophy, students are engaging in a more detailed exploration of the nature of African thought through Tedla's explanations and descriptions: Indigenous thought reflects fundamental unity as expressed in the arts, crafts, oral tradition, and symbols. Traditional African thought affirms life, the individual person, work and a connected, organic sense of community (Tedla, 1995, pp. 17–41).

The readings from Tedla amplify the historical background and epistemological framework presented by Njoroge and Benaars. The Enlightenment, Western Liberalism, Empiricism, Deism, Social Darwinism and related perspectives on knowledge and the environment have destructive implications and consequences for the African continent. Africa's people, natural resources, and economy bear the destructive brunt of Western approaches (Tedla, 1995, pp. 79–108).

In this context, an expatriate professor can only point to the inherent meaning of African traditional ways as described in the text. As this emphasis is occurring, the experience of the student is quite different from that of the instructor. On the one hand, the professor reads, understands and explains conceptually that African traditions are both educational and deeply connected with human life and with the universe. The traditions form an organic integrated whole spanning an individual's life from before human birth and beyond death. The traditions are an essential aspect of the community's existence. They involve lifelong teaching and learning. They impart holistic ways of knowing and they embody African traditional wisdom, Sankofa. On the other hand, the reading, reflective African student knows experientially, the deep significance of the traditional ways. Even the student whose previous education excluded or belittled the traditional ways experiences a reawakening to the reality at the core of one's being: *One is African!* Being African means being alive, gifted and strong in ways which constitute a worldview uniquely different from the Western perspective.

As students read about personal character development, the skills, concepts, and content of ancient traditional ways, and about how the Amara Welloye people of Ethiopia implement traditional African education, they begin to change. Their involvement and interest in the course begin to mount as they experience increased intellectual and emotional awareness, brought about through explication of traditional African thought in the Amara Welloye setting (Tedla, 1995, pp. 149–165). While they are reading about the traditional practices of the Amara Welloye, they are recalling their own.

For many, African traditional ways are part of the remote past. They are surprised and overjoyed when conversation about traditional ways brings a sense of life and vitality to birth within their own consciousness. They experience a newly found alertness to course material and engagement with one another.

With Afro-centricity as the chief criterion (Tedla, 1995, pp. 167–206), students read and reflect for themselves upon the qualities of present-day African education. Some findings include the continuing presence of subtle styles of subjugation, emphasis upon the individual to the neglect of community, insufficient skill-based education (i.e., in nursing, or engineering), inadequate amounts of time for formal education, lack of education for women. Tedla (1995, pp. 209–219) proposes African oriented ‘Sankofan Education.’

Sankofa is a term from the Akan tribe of Ghana. Taken literally Sankofa means ‘Return to the Source and fetch.’ A Sankofan approach looks to the early inspiration in one’s culture, heritage, and traditions. Then the Sankofan orientation interprets and applies the principles in one’s background to the present in such a manner as to find significance and direction. The Sankofan approach is not rigid or stuck in the past. It rather integrates the best of traditional education with what is necessary and helpful in contemporary models, both within and outside the continent. Such integration has the potential to reclaim African history (particularly that which has been omitted or distorted), to retain the uniqueness and life of the distinctively African culture in the world, and to empower the African people (Tedla, 1995, p. 1).

A careful reading of Ngugi’s *The River Between* (1965), set in the Kikuyu area of East Africa, allows students to penetrate more deeply, through fiction, into the conflicts between the traditional African way of living and the patterns imposed by colonialism, particularly in the realm of religion-sponsored education. Muthoni’s desire to participate in the ancient tribal customs of her people offers a powerful illustration of the conflict which can develop as Africans long to connect with their ancient traditions (Ngugi, 1965, pp. 23–27). Class discussion becomes more active. The link between theoretical concepts and the students’ lived-experience becomes more direct. Some begin to realise the impact of what others already know: not all that the ‘colonial masters’ did was good for the African people. The harsh reality begins to take root in the students’ minds; nevertheless, they hold fast to their newly increased pride in being African.

Through the visit to the Jos Museum, students link what they have been hearing and reading about ethno-philosophy with the experience of seeing and observing very ancient pottery and other traditional tools and artifacts. They learn that the

oral history of the geographic area in which Jos is situated (Plateau State) extends back to an ancient civilization dating from about the year 400. The realization is awesome as they connect with the past customs of the environs.

A course unit entitled 'Roots of Ignorance towards Africa' illustrates the shaky foundation upon which some Western attitudes towards Africa are built. Through questionable interpretations based upon Genesis 9:18–10:32, Isidore of Seville's (d.636) *Etymologie* 8, 3, 2–3 (in Brehaut, 1964) and *Journal of the Discovery of the Nile* (Speke, 1864, pp. 224–225, 242–243, 494–496) one can trace the development of past demeaning attitudes towards Africans. Today such attitudes would be called unconscionable. In this context, *Africa: A History Denied* (1995) is shown. The film portrays the tragic despoliation of the African continent by outside countries. Earlier readings and discussions had prepared an informed audience whose viewing of the film leads to a more vivid realization of the effects of colonization than previous class activities had succeeded in doing. The portrayal of the richness of ancient African cultures affirms and strengthens the validity of the concept of Sankofa. While *Africa: A History Denied* (1995) clarifies some of the roots of Christian ignorance towards the African race, it also documents the entry by Muslim nations into East Africa. More could be done in an educational philosophy course such as this one to illustrate the Muslim contribution to education in Africa.

Since the tradition of female circumcision is a key element in the unfolding of Ngugi's *The River Between* (1965), the film *Female Circumcision: Human Rites* (1998) provides an avenue for sometimes curious and sometimes heated discussion of the practice. There is reverent, delicate discussion between female students and male students. Their faculties for critical analysis are sharpened as they adamantly question to what purpose such a film is used in the Western world, to what degree the actresses are willing participants in the production of the film, and to what extent just compensation is provided for them. Despite the pain *Female Circumcision: Human Rites* (1998) evokes, there is a sense of increasing ownership of African pride among the students.

Dark Passages: The Atlantic Slave Trade (1997) is a powerful documentary. On the one hand, it is a fitting sequel to *Female Circumcision: Human Rites* (1998) with its ability to evoke pain, passion and pride. On the other hand, there would be some wisdom in having an African professor introduce the film, reflect on it in silent reverence with students, and process the content with them. Despite the raw emotion which the film has the potential to elicit, students say they prefer to know the reality of the African continent vis-à-vis the rest of the world rather than remain ignorant. They want to act as world citizens with African pride!

Those who reflect together upon *Dark Passages: The Atlantic Slave Trade* (1997) experience a painful burden. The eyes of their understanding have been opened. It is difficult to accept the past. As students continue to work together, their cohesiveness deepens, and their pride in being African reaches a high point. Then a new dynamic enters the conversation. It is as if scales have been lifted from the students' eyes. Many experience a hunger to appropriate the traditions of African traditional education as they apply to themselves, to their particular tribe, from their

particular village. At the same time, there is a newly developing appreciation for the traditions of African education as they apply to the other students enrolled in the course. Interest in one another's cherished customs deepens. Further, there is a desire to acquire a solid grasp of Western traditions in education in order to become as fully equipped as possible to meet emerging contemporary needs. Finally, there is a desire to share newly found knowledge with other Africans.

Life-texts

During the culminating activities of the Educational Philosophy course, students create their own individual presentations and/or small group dramas as ways of demonstrating their understanding and interpretation of course content. In addition, students voluntarily write short pieces which have particular personal significance. Finally there are anecdotal comments which give rise to the word 'life-texts' as subtitle for this final section of the chapter.

Specific forms of pedagogy serve as the focal point for the individual presentations and small group dramas. For example, one student dramatically describes details of the wedding preparations and ceremony for a Yoruba (Nigeria) couple with attention to its pedagogical aspects and its view of women. In another case, a small group dramatises how a concerned group of citizens might go before the board of education in order to argue the case for incorporation of traditional ideas in education into the present-day African curriculum. The presentations/dramas not only demonstrate student appropriation of course material (often with lively humor), they also elicit a keen interest on the part of observers, most of whom are other students in the course. The result is a deepening interest in and appreciation of one another's specific tribal setting with particular focus on its traditional pedagogical foundations.

Openness to the particular tribal setting of another builds upon the common foundation of the traditions. The tribes share common goals in their approaches to education: to develop latent physical skills, character, respect for elders, intellectual skills, and vocational skills; also, they want to encourage participation in the community and to promote the community's cultural heritage (Fafunwa, 1982, pp. 11–12). Many Africans believe in the social character of traditional education and in its capacity to impart progressive achievement (Moumouni, 1968, p. 15). By the very fact of being African the students share a common base in their traditions, for example, the naming ceremony of a newly born infant. Interest in the traditions of those in other tribes builds upon the common foundation each person shares in coming from a background rooted in such customs. While just a few brief examples are offered above, the sharing can be very rich, with variations in custom and tribal background.

Some students voluntarily develop their own creative work after completion of the course. One reflects upon traditional forms of education in the curriculum in a carefully researched paper 'Should Indigenous African Education and Thought be Wholly Incorporated into the Modern African Educational Curriculum?'

(Owuamanam, 2000). Specialised expertise as preparation for life in stratified African society, rites of initiation, and folklore are reviewed as forms of traditional education. The author argues in favor of traditional education due to its moral elements, its focus on the child, its flexibility to be both informal and formal, and its discipline. Traditional education is geared towards set roles for girls and women, a major drawback, whereas Western education tends to offer more opportunities to women. This problem with traditional education is acknowledged, but not addressed. The author concludes by favoring traditional education because it fosters the development of the total human person, strengthens character, provides intellectual and vocational training, and conveys a sense of belonging to the community (Owuamanam, 2000).

Sylvia Enendu, another student, writes a free-verse reflection (Enendu, 2002) upon the meaning of Sankofa evoked through course readings and conversation. After describing some images and effects of life in the modern world and her own subsequent search for meaning, she is drawn back to the influence of her grandmother, Nneochie. Being drawn back ultimately means to go forward:

Where Have I Been?

Immersed in thought I wonder where have I been?
I ask myself, again and again, where have I been?
Confused, disturbed, whirling deep within myself,
Where have I been?
Am I lost? I ask myself, have I lost myself?
Where am I? Where do I meet myself? Who am I?
I have wandered far and wide,
Gone to far flung places, danced to the piano,
Clinked glasses, the sound of false laughter familiar to my ears.
I have left myself behind.
Ah! In what places I have been!
Yet hollow to my inner self, to the core of myself.
I am searching,
Searching and searching!
Perhaps I can find myself.
Will you help me find myself?
Light shines showing me the way.
The light of these past few days with you and myself beckons me.
I move forward, towards it.
Yet I look back to where I have been.
Will I go back?
Still you call me, 'Mgbokwo.'
Nneochie calls me, 'Come and learn wisdom from my breasts' she says.
I move forward,
To where I was born.

The two student-authors each communicate individual and quite differing reflective responses to the notion of traditional African education. They exercise both intellectual and imaginative breadth and depth. There is a sense of authenticity evident in each work.

During both summers (2000, 2002) some students commented that it is difficult to live in present day Africa because there are two 'scripts' running in their heads: that of the African and that of the modern world. One must often attempt to ignore one 'script' in order to think and act out of the other. When confronted during the course with words describing the differences between traditional thought and education on the one hand, and present day experience on the other, students recognise the phenomenon of the two 'scripts' all too well. Afterwards they begin to use their own African vocabulary which is richly descriptive and vivid. Classroom conversation takes on new life.

Again, during both summers, new thoughts and images arise in the minds of some students. Without describing the thoughts and images, they state that the thoughts and the images are both unprecedented, yet very familiar. Ruminating over the new, which is somehow familiar, brings beauty and peace.

One is left with the impression that there is considerably more to Sankofa than it is possible to explore in an introductory course. Hopefully the introductory course will serve to interest Africans educators in further study and teaching of educational philosophy. It will be the African philosophers of education who will be able to open up the riches of Sankofa as a fundamental source of wisdom for their students.

Implications

In Africa today there is a high premium placed upon education and upon its potential for the African people. Within this context, educational philosophy is understood to be very important, particularly in the realm of teacher training. Nevertheless, diverse meanings and interpretations are attached to the term educational philosophy. This essay describes experiences in which African traditional wisdom is honored for what it is, namely, a contribution, which is deeply religious, philosophically based, and formative of the African people. It predates formal Western philosophy.

While there is considerable literature on African traditional customs, religions, philosophy, and education, Njoroge & Benaars (1986) rightly demonstrate the absence of literature describing genuine African philosophy of education. At the same time, they make a case for the existence of such a genuine African philosophy of education. They lay a foundation and develop a framework for an African philosophy of education. Tedla (1995), drawing upon her research in the Akan traditions (Ghana) and with the Amara Welloye people (Ethiopia), contributes to the need for literature by demonstrating the implementation of African educational philosophy in a single tribe, the Amara.

Both Njoroge & Benaars (1986) and Tedla (1995) demonstrate an integration of African history with global history. More recently, Okrah (2003) contributes along

similar lines to the literature of African philosophy of education in his analysis of three particular elements in the Akan (Ghana) culture: folktales, proverbs, and art & symbol.

There is validity in discussing an 'African' philosophy of education because being African is a distinctive way of being in the world. At the same time, there is a need for continuing specific tribally oriented research and scholarship similar to that undertaken by Tedla (1995) and Okrah (2003). African students want to know about the traditional wisdom of their particular people.

The material developed by Njoroge & Benaars (1986), Tedla (1995), and Okrah (2003) provides a clear literary framework for present day study of African educational philosophy. However, students of their work would be assisted by a collection of individual studies based upon traditional customs and their place in African educational philosophy. An anthology of primary source readings in African traditional education would complement the work already done. Brown and Hiskett (1976) orient the expatriate to traditional forms of education in various regions and tribes of Africa. Nevertheless, there is need to develop their study further, that is, to penetrate more deeply into the wisdom and significance of the traditional forms. Only the African can work towards this task.

The anthology of primary source readings would fill a need in the educational philosophy course. There is little available in an accessible form to serve as a companion piece to one of the framework texts. For example, West Africans want to read the works of contemporary Ghanaian and Nigerian educational philosophers. They want Sankofa, as experienced within their tribes, to find its way into the literature where it deserves a rightful place.

Life-texts, the responses of students to traditional course materials, presented earlier in this essay, offer a strong rationale for the compilation of an anthology of readings in African educational philosophy. The life-texts suggest that African traditional wisdom continues to have perennial value and meaning, particularly within the field of educational philosophy.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND PEACE EDUCATION: A PARTNERSHIP IMPERATIVE FOR OUR DAY

Dr. Linda L. Baratte

*Centre for Theological and Spiritual Development, College of Saint Elizabeth, Morristown,
New Jersey, U. S. A*

Introduction

‘And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord;
and great shall be the peace of thy children’ (Isaiah 54:13).

One of the key and disturbing insights from ‘reading the signs of the times’ is not only how religion has continued to be a source of conflict among peoples but how it has been complicit in giving a sacred patina to the violence, terrorism, and atrocities in our day that seem to know neither ends nor boundaries. Recent arguments in the United States Supreme Court in favor of the constitutional validity of the phrase ‘one nation, under God’ in the country’s Pledge of Allegiance belie the power of religion to divide families, communities, and nations. Palestine and Kashmir, Bosnia and Kosovo, Northern Ireland, Iraq, and the Sudan – names that scroll along the bottom of cable news television channels serve as sad reminders of how contemporary clashes of civilization are predicated on and fueled by religious conflicts. Sectarianism, bigotry, fanaticism, *and* religion are each factors in community strife; each has been used as an imprimatur for the most destructive, heinous expressions of our humanity.

Educating for peace and justice becomes a crucial imperative of any curriculum for religious literacy in the 21st century when lines separating patriotism, zeal, and religion are dangerously blurred, when ‘nation’ or ‘ideology’ is militantly embraced as a privileged locus of God’s plan of redemption in human history. Religious educator Mary Boys writes that an epistemology fundamental to any religious education must be a stance to ‘dilate our sense of the world’ (Boys, 1989, p. 159) (Boys credits Huston Smith in *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*. NY: Crossroad,

1982, p. 87 with this phrase). How can religious educators help to dilate a sense of the world where pathways to peace and mercy could be paved with more purpose and hope? How can religious education help to forthrightly address the tension between the evil in human history that is aborning in the present moment and the honoring of the dignity of the human person that is fostered and celebrated in all religious traditions? How might they teach not only the meaning of peace and justice but how peace and justice can be lived and achieved?

The unholy alliance between religion and violence stands in stark contrast to the human need for peace and the value of peace universally shared by every religious and spiritual tradition. The Hebrew concept of peace, or *shalom*, informs both the Hebrew and Christian testaments, for example. Peace is not a 'mental state' of the individual; rather, it is a way of life, a communal state of well-being and wholeness and a public harmony embodied in right relations with God, creation, and others. The Christian scriptures teach that Jesus is the fullest expression of the reconciliation between God and creation. 'Christ is our peace,' writes the apostle Paul to the Ephesians. His witness points to one new, indivisible humanity – a new dwelling place for God. For Christians, a response to the call to this life of apostleship must be to seamlessly reflect the unity and harmony and a stance for righteousness that are the hallmarks of the new creation. In fact, as one Christian spiritual writer argues, 'Jesus insists that making peace so deeply reflects the character of God that those who do so are called 'children of God'' (Kenneson, 1999, p. 86). The Roman Catholic Vatican II Council in its deliberations in 'The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World' affirmed that peace is not merely the absence of war but an enterprise of justice and the fruit of love (Flannery, 1992, pp. 986–987). In each religious tradition, peace is both gift from God and something to be yearned for and pursued. Religious educators are in a privileged position to bring to bear a professionalism and passion that may make that peaceful enterprise a possibility in the present day.

A Curriculum for Peace

One of the first tasks for religious educators who would call their communities to a stance for peace will be critical reflection – a recognition that faith-inspired terrorists can find in their religious tradition and history both texts and role models that give legitimacy to their own use of violence. Religious leaders must forcefully denounce the complicity of religion in giving any kind of sanctioning to the use of violence to protect or to promote their own sectarian interests. As one scholar dedicated to interfaith dialogue notes:

When the activities of those who preach, teach, and operate in God's name are associated with fanaticism, cruelty, or murder, the divine name is desecrated. Such behaviors reduce the credibility of all religions. Therefore, no religion should be exempt from this effort to stop the violence.... All religions have

become tarnished by the idea that increased devotion to God morphs into claims of absolutism, which easily translate into intolerance and violence (Greenberg, 2004, p. 89).

This task will mean a more forthright commitment to culling out both the theology and history of peacemaking and obstacles to peacemaking within each tradition. Religious educators will be called to name with more intentionality the resources within their traditions for the work of peace, justice, and reconciliation and the affirmation of religious pluralism and respect for differences (see, for example, Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith, eds. *Religion and Peacebuilding*. Albany, NY: State University of NY Press, 2004). Part of that process will be the probing of the ethical re-evaluation of war by modern theologians, moral philosophers, and social thinkers and making accessible competing ethical claims, recognising that peace may be a 'contested field of theological ideas' even within the tradition. Witness the stance of just war theorists and pacifists each claiming a home within Catholic social teaching and ethical demands for peace, for example.

Equally imperative will be an exploration of peace among nations through positive appreciation of other religious traditions and their potential to be religious sources of peaceful social transformation. Typical of the rich panoply of several timely resources which invite this exploration are *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding* by Mary C. Boys; *Beyond Violence. Religious Sources of Social Transformation in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* by James L. Heft; and *Liberating Faith. Religious Voices for Justice, Peace, and Ecological Wisdom*, edited by Roger S. Gottlieb. Religious educators recognise, however, that inter-religious awareness cannot rest merely on ecclesial good manners. As one religious educator experienced in interfaith communion has written:

To reduce their violent tendencies, all religions must now take upon themselves the commitment to a thoroughgoing radical pluralism. Religions should insist on pluralism in religious life, and in economic, political, and social life as well as in culture, to protect against their own totalising tendencies.... The potential gain is that faiths learn to witness effectively in the presence of the full dignity of the other. This would pave the way for a plurality of positive, credible models of faith enriching and correcting each other – preserving abuse and violence on the part of any one privileged faith. Pluralism is the only surefire way to achieve a balance of power in which all religions are encouraged to act ethically (Greenberg, 2004, p. 106).

A respect for religious pluralism cannot be achieved by religious educators in an illusive search for an homogenised consensus but only as they embody in a fulsome way the peacemaking core of their religious heritage. As two pioneer educators in the advocacy of interfaith dialogue have written, 'The road to understanding the role of spiritual traditions in advancing teachings about peace is thus not *around* the distinct cultures in which such teachings are born, but rather *through* them to a ground that demands of all of them the supreme effort to turn to one another

in dialogue' (Gordon and Grob, 1987, p. 8). Added to the agenda for educating for peace will be formation in the openness required to engage in a pro-active, celebratory endorsement of pluralism and diversity in culture and religious belief and practice – an epistemology 'beyond tolerance' where skills in listening, dialogue, and discernment are developed and both the predisposition and opportunity for discovering and affirming the religious truth in the other are celebrated.

Skills learned in this kind of an invitational religious education—the interpretation of experiences and attitudes, the critical questioning and examination of implications, and the embracing of new connections between tradition and transformation—act as a counter to the indoctrination that is the foundation on which 'holy war' violence first takes root. Faith can grow and deepen as it is illumined by the other. As two theologians committed to this stance have written:

Until people of different faiths feel they are fully equal in their humanity and so all have things to teach and things to learn, the anthropological foundations of effective dialogue will still be missing. Until people of different faiths feel God has addressed them all and so all have religious wisdom to teach and religious wisdom to learn, the theological foundations of effective dialogue will still be missing (Carmody and Carmody, 1988, p. 8).

This is the taproot of the work for peace and justice and the reconstitution of our broken world—the foundation on which true collaboration among persons of faith must rest, they argue.

Several resources are available for religious educators who commit to making skills and experience in inter-religious dialogue an essential part of religious education in their faith traditions. *Sharing Shalom. A Process for Local Interfaith Dialogue Between Christian and Jew* (Cunningham and Starr, 1998) is one fine example designed for use in an interfaith adult education experience. Included in the book are rich, informative essays (an exploration of Jewish and Christian understandings of the Messiah, for example) and a Leaders Guide, plus questions for discussion and a prayer service for each unit. Other resources to meet the same curriculum goal are David Sandmel, et al. 2001. *Irreconcilable Differences. A Learning Resource for Jews and Christians*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press and Judith A. Berling, *Understanding Other Religious Worlds*. NY: Orbis, 2004. A free study guide for fostering Christian-Muslim dialogue, 'Do Christians and Muslims Worship the Same God?' can be downloaded from www.christiancentury.org. Theologian and religious educator Dr. Reinhold Boschki of Tübingen University has authored several articles appropriate for adult education groups where the writings of Elie Wiesel prompt exploration of memory and reconciliation as wellsprings of a peaceful future (see, for example, 'Education After Auschwitz. Over the Practical Dimension of the Christian-Jewish Discussion,' *Church and Israel*, 1:1992; pp. 83–91 and 'Remind by Telling. References to the Use of the Texts of Elie Wiesel in the Work of Memory' in Albert H. Friedlander, et al (eds.), *Elie Wiesel. The Six Days of the Creation and Destruction. A Book of Hope*, pp. 111–119).

A number of case studies chronicling the exciting international ventures in inter-religious initiatives for peace bespeak of other religious education needs as well. Religious nongovernmental organizations such as Caritas International, the Gandhi Peace Foundation, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Lutheran World Service, plus national and transnational religious communities, ecumenical and inter-religious bodies, and other expressions of para-ecclesial movements have each made a profound contribution to nonviolent social change and reconciliation on the international scene, bringing to bear the need for new skills in conflict mediation, management, and resolution. In August 2000 more than 1,000 representatives of transnational as well as indigenous religious traditions gathered at the United Nations for a Millennium Summit of world religious leaders. The summit heralded the world community's 'unprecedented recognition of religious peacebuilding as a viable option, as well as a new willingness among religious leaders and organizations to play a defined role in an integrated, multilayered approach to peacebuilding' (Little and Appleby, 2004, p. 3). Preventive diplomacy, election monitoring, advocacy of legal and human rights, education and training, resource and crisis management, refugee resettlement – these are the new 'job descriptions' required to show leadership in a complex process of social, political, and religious change, what Scott Appleby labels religious peacebuilding through transforming conflict and restructuring society (Little and Appleby, 2004, p. 2). How are our faith communities inviting their congregants to develop and place these kinds of skills at the service of Church and world? Religious educators will be a part of the invitation and the response.

Part of the curriculum for religious educators is also the need to ferret out new partners and new venues in an advocacy of peacemaking, thinking relationally, cross-culturally and cross-religiously in allocating and marshalling financial and human resources. Building concordances and educating in collaboration with transnational and interfaith civic groups working for peace is one way that religious educators can model a non-hierarchical leadership style dedicated to using power in an integrative, nonviolent stance that invites others to work for the common good and the moral purpose of peace. More ecumenical outreach in the founding, sponsoring, linking, or transformation of centres for peace and justice may be one tangible to embody religious peacebuilding at the local level.

Organizations such as Pax Christi, Bread for the World, Amnesty International, death penalty reform groups in the United States, and other centres for peace and justice carry tremendous educational power and potential through their newsletters, internships, speakers bureaus, conventions, lobbying, and advocacy information packets and through prayer vigils, rallies, and other kinds of symbolic activity. Religious educator Mary Boys might describe these organizations as 'a vision of faith transforming culture; their praxis orientation...suggests that true knowledge is transformative. They place emphasis not only on theological understanding but also on the skills of social analysis. Staff members of peace and justice centres are often leaders in the production of curricular materials and generally are committed to dialogical and process-oriented pedagogues' (Boys, 1989, pp. 140, 213). A 2003–04

publication catalogue 'Resources for Countering Violence and Fostering Justice' from Pax Christi (an international Catholic peace advocacy group) illustrates Boys' insight.

The Institute of Peace and Justice and the Parenting for Peace and Justice Network, both coordinated by religious educators James and Kathy McGinnis, are two examples. The Institute is an independent, interfaith organisation founded in 1970 as a response to the realities of war, racism, and global injustice. The Network is an interfaith, transnational association of families who recognise that the 'well-being of our families is tied to the well-being of our global family and the earth itself.' Both organisations produce a wealth of information on public policy issues on war and peace, coupled with skill building to foster peace in families and communities.

Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) is another organisation ripe for partnering with religious educators. ESR is a non-profit organization based in the United States providing resources and curriculum for educators helping young people to develop the convictions and skills needed to shape a safe, sustainable, and just world. Programs, packages, and publications offered by ESR are designed to nurture the ethical, emotional, and social development of children through leadership in conflict resolution, diversity awareness, violence prevention, character education, and intergroup relations. Using these resources, the 'values questions' challenging the very bases of the social order that make peace education so controversial in a public school setting in the United States could be explored unabashedly in an environment where religious education is the goal.

Universities can also be a source of collaboration, consultation, and professional development for religious educators. The Centre for Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Understanding at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA, the Masters of Arts degree in Jewish-Christian Studies offered by Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, USA, and the Global Ethic Foundation in Tübingen, Germany (www.global-ethic.org) are three examples of the number of academic institutions committed to inter-religious research and education through programs and publications.

Peace Advocacy in the Public Square

The commitment to this curriculum for religious and peace education—what educator Dieter Hessel names as a pedagogy demanding 'a critical consciousness and hopeful vision that ennoble[s] [us] to evaluate events and act courageously to change dominant systems, encounter fresh claims and ideas of justice, and work for *shalom*' (Hessell, 1982, p. 111)—brings into sharper relief the political implications of all education. A common theme in the writing of religious educators is that educating for peace and justice must also lead to public advocacy and public action beyond the life of the congregation.

In *Fashion Me a People* (1989) the late religious educator Maria Harris used the call to advocacy – the speaking out in the face of injustice – as an example of the

multiple nature of educational ministry, a call infusing each of her five curricular forms. (In an earlier work, Harris (1981) had described *kerygma*—word enfleshed in speech—as a ministry of advocacy, a ‘pushing back boundaries, taking on unpopular positions, and often speaking the word that no one wishes to hear.’ In this work Harris defines *diakonia* as a ‘ministry of troublemaking.’) Responding to that call as religious educators requires expression in the prayer, teaching, worshiping, and serving life of the community of the faithful, as she claimed. There is an advocacy dimension to all of schooling and community life, just as any stance of advocacy and prophetic speech must be girded by the prayer and worship life of the community. In Harris’ schema, one natural and welcome expression of the intersection of the curriculums of *diakonia* and *kerygma* must be a commitment to what she terms social legislation – political advocacy that would work to identify and change the systems and structures that perpetuate unjust conditions (Harris, 1989, pp. 152–155).

Mary Boys spells out the role of advocate—rallying others to a cause—as one way that a teacher may properly provide the resources by which people might come to claim information, concepts, and attitudes in their work for peace (Boys, 1983, p. 99). Religious visions and vocabulary, while distinctive from secular peace movements and ‘politics as usual,’ can contribute as authentic partners in the public-square debates on the morality of war and the mandates for peace. Religious educator Timothy Lines succinctly states the point. ‘Either one does the full work of the religious educator, including the inseparable dimension of change agency, or one pursues another vocation entirely. Genuine religious education and unquestioning acceptance of the status quo are incompatible partners. One will have to subsume the other,’ he argues (Lines, 1992, p. 366). Religious educator John Elias emphasises this same idea in his essay ‘Religious Education for Power and Liberation. ‘A liberating religious education ultimately demands what he terms ‘politicization’—the immersion in the social, political, and economic realities where faith is forced to flourish. Religious education, he contends, ‘will attempt to bring people beyond the point of critical awareness to the point of action against injustice. ...Jesus’ teaching is political teaching, concerned with how men and women are to live and act together, not with men and women in isolation’ (Elias, 1986, pp. 170–171).

In religious educator Suzanne Toton’s work *World Hunger* (1982) an example can be found of the carefully crafted intersection of advocacy and religious education called for by Boys, Lines, and Elias. In a withering analysis Toton examines the inextricable link between decisions of the economic, social, and political systems in what she labels the First World and the crushing poverty in the Third. Her larger message: education in general and Christian religious education in particular have responsibility to effect systematic and structural change for peace and social justice. Using the methodology of political and liberation theology, Toton unveils through critical analysis and reflection the ‘good news’ of the Christian religious tradition. The gospel is a public and political summons, she contends. Faith cannot be lived ahistorically nor apolitically. The freedom, peace, justice, and love Jesus spoke of are concrete realities, calling for social, structural, and political expression. Toton

goes on to critique the role that religious institutions have played in maintaining the status quo, and then mines the biblical tradition as an imperative for religious educators in developing a contemporary Christian social consciousness and an agenda for systemic social change. Toton's work stands as a pointer to how religious, ethical and moral imperatives can be expressed in a pedagogy of advocacy. The ill-placed hierarchy of values implied in the First World/Third World dichotomy is a part of Toton's critique. Toton confines her analysis and admonitions to the Christian tradition, it should be noted. There is no specific reference to the concern for social justice that could be a source of fruitful ecumenical dialogue and action.

Conversation Partners for Peace

As religious educators develop a curriculum for peace and look to collaborators in that sacred venture, scripture scholar Raymond Brown's classic work *Religion and Violence* offers an important admonition. Recognising that war, with its overt physical acts of destruction, is only the most obvious example of violence in our day, Brown broadens and deepens the scope of 'violence' to include what he labels the subtle forms of violation of personhood and human dignity and the suppression of human potential that characterise the systems, structures, and institutions of society. He writes:

It is linguistically proper to speak, for example, about the violence *of* the slum – not the violence *in* the slum, but the violence *of* the slum. The difference between the two phrases is important. It is not enough to say that violent acts, such as mugging, rape, or robbery, take place in a slum environment. The point is that the slum environment, the structure of the slum itself, works violence against those who live within it, even if they never experience the physical harm so often attendant on slum dwelling (1987, pp. 35–36).

His constructs would call religious educators to ever be in close conversation with their pastoral counseling peers—in designing domestic violence prevention programs, for example—and with social justice outreach committees and professionals in continuing to name and confront the violence inherent in oppressive, unjust economic policies and in the sexual exploitation of children and immigrant labor. Those who pray for peace must work for justice, Pope Paul VI admonished.

Church communities themselves as 'systems, structures, and institutions of society' have pedagogical value as they model an ethos of peace through shared power and dedication to a mutuality and collegiality in ministry. As they nurture the spirituality of the vocation of peacemaking of their members, they take on the formative task of linking private piety and public responsibility, personal growth and transformation of social structures.

Another partner for religious educators in the work for peace will be the aesthetic resources that tap the transcendent power of art to shape imagination, vision, and

the possibility of peace. Poems, photographs, plays, and images quicken a deep yearning for a more peaceful world; stories of grace, goodness, redemption, and courage make it seem possible. Witness the power of the two-page display in the *New York Times* of the portraits of the over 300 firefighters who perished in the Twin Tower attacks of September 11, 2001, the almost unbearable sorrow evoked by the rhythmic cadence in the reading on national television of the names of the first 1,000 men and women from the United States to die in the Iraq war, or the poignancy as the wind played through the newly planted Forest of the Absent, a grove of olive and cypress trees commemorating the victims of the March, 2004 Madrid train bombings.

A potent example of the pairing of art and education is Raymond Brown's use of the charcoal drawings of Kaethe Kollwitz in *Religion and Violence*, showing in ways 'beyond words,' as he frames it, the power of love as resistance to the idols of violence and death. Kollwitz had lost a son in World War I and a grandson in World War II. Through her work, she transformed her grief into a passionate commitment to peace and the struggle against all causes of violence and war. Her drawings were so powerful in their condemnation that Hitler's Third Reich labeled them 'degenerate' and prohibited their exhibition. Brown writes:

For while the drawings clearly depict the horrific consequences of war and violence, particularly in their impact on children, they likewise make clear that horror is not the last word...[Reconciliation and peace] are positive goals toward which we too can work and which we can try to embody, even in a world that seems to treat them so cavalierly as our own. If Kaethe Kollwitz could move from negation into such affirmation during the early 1920s in Europe, that is a beam of hope for us in the darkness that surrounds our own time (Brown, vii–viii).

Kollwitz's depictions of the oppressive burdens of grief and despair that are 'collateral damage' of war are among the most poignant images of all 20th century art.

Studying the Holocaust Through Film and Literature (Kassenoff and Menbach, 2004) is an example of several resources for educators which recognise this same power of visual images to inform and transform a stance for peace. Contemporary films and documentaries carry great potential as 'visual parables' and can be particularly effective in adult religious education programs (e.g., *Romero*, *Schindler's List*, *Gandhi*, *In the Name of the Father*, *Dead Man Walking*, *The War*, *Gallipoli*, and *Eleni*, and the newly released *Hotel Rwanda*, *Sometimes in April*, *Spohie Scholl –The Final Days*, and *Coca – The Dove From Chechnya*).

Religious educators also embrace the power of story operative in all religious traditions to shape that transformation, instances where 'individuals are convicted, inspired, and sustained by that which rings true in story, whether the story is encountered through drama, folk tale, great literature, or sacred text' (Friesen, 1986, p. 241). As theologian Terrence Tilley contends, story can provide 'the bridge over which faith moves from the tradition of the community into the life

of the individual' (1990, p. 3). Faith is evinced only in concrete human experience and in the historic imprint of individual lives. As religious educators cull out the dominant faith understandings of a life well-lived and, in the Christian tradition, point to fresh exemplars of the character of Christ, they call their communities to reframe religious imaginations and point to ways they may have settled for thinner, less challenging accommodations. These stories then 'truly become my own story...showing me how to move from the injustice of my life to a justified life or from violence to peace' (1990, pp. 16–17).

The power of the witness of martyrs for peace found in many religious traditions carries particular potency. As one Christian author writes forcefully:

'In the last century alone, thousands gave their lives to keep their faith in times of darkness. They were Christians of all confessions and denominations. Their lives and deaths are the testimony of one of the greatest gifts of Christianity to peacebuilding: keeping the very possibility of hope, life, and peace alive in times of violent persecution' (Bartoli, 2004, p. 149).

Elizabeth Johnson, in *Friends of God and Prophets*, speaks of what she calls paradigmatic saints, those persons whose story and witness stand as 'an act of resistance, as a call to action, as a spur to fidelity.' In the telling and reliving of the particulars and the power of these lives, she reminds us, 'the community itself catches the vision of a world made whole and becomes itself, a little more, an advocate for peaceable community throughout the earth, a counterforce against violence and domination' (1998, pp. 236, 239).

Recognition of the educative power of the exemplar is woven into the curriculum for peace and justice developed over the years by Christian religious educators James and Kathy McGinnis. Four integrated components for peace education are found in all of their programs geared to a religious education setting: access to the story of Jesus; access to the story of inspired lives who have staked a claim for peace; access to the story of victims of oppression and injustice; and community action planning. For example, one of their lesson plans for early adolescents—'Today's Peacemakers'—concretises the meaning of peace and peacemaking by presenting 'living examples of peacemakers so that peacemaking becomes a real option for students, at present as well as some time in the future, and to inspire students to choose that option.' Individual and small group projects, case studies, videos, and reading lists are furnished on the life and witness on such peacemakers as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, Daniel and Philip Berrigan, Dom Helder Camara, Jean Donovan, and Franz Jagerstatter. Dorothy Day and Mother Teresa are included as well (McGinnis, 1986). *Facing History and Ourselves; The Jews of Poland* (1998) is another excellent resource for educators working with adolescents. Using autobiography, diaries, official documents, and literary works, the multi-faceted curriculum stimulates students to think about the complexities of good and evil, the consequences of choices, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

One final conversation partner for religious educators may be found in the intersection of the concerns and values of feminism and the work for peace. In her challenge to the Church to make a commitment to the promulgation of positive peace through development of a biblical theology of peace and research into the history of peace, theologian Mary Evelyn Jegen sees the women's movement as a welcome partner. 'The intersection of the women's and peace movements can bring into focus ways of communication, of organization of power, of ways of dealing with conflict, of structures of mutuality that offer needed alternatives to structures of domination and subordination,' she says (1991, p. 300). Feminism rejects the power principle of domination and subjugation and celebrates relational and empathetic values. Sensitive to the social and historical contexts for moral decision-making, feminism shows special concern for the virtue of compassion and for those who suffer. Both feminists and peace advocates share a commitment to the virtues of peace in the global community, to the dignity and interdependence of all peoples, to solidarity with those on the underside of history, and to the use of power for collaboration, not domination.

One theologian who has also explored the explicit links between the concerns of feminism and peace is Rosemary Radford Ruether. 'Feminism,' writes Ruether,

fundamentally rejects the power principle of domination and subjugation. It rejects the concept of power which says that one side's victory must be the other side's defeat. Feminism must question social structures based on this principle at every level, from the competition of men and women in personal relationships to the competition of the nations of the globe...Nobody wins unless all win. Warmaking has reached such a level of destructiveness that the defeat of one side means the defeat of all, the destruction of the Earth itself. Feminism today sees its links with the cause of human survival and the survival of the planet itself (1985, pp. 72-73).

She goes on to unveil in feminism the very embrace of nonviolence, seeing in it the 'courageous resistance to violence and injustice which reaches out to affirm rather than to negate the humanity of the other person'—an alternative vision of the authentic self and life in community once provided by 'radical Christianity' that transcends, as she describes it, the aggressive dehumanization of others or timid acquiescence to the violence of others. Moral theologian Lisa Sowle Cahill reinforces the linkage when she too affirms 'affinity with pacifist values' in the relational and empathetic values of feminism and its identification with those who are 'history's victims' on the underside of power (1993). Cahill adds an important caveat to her assessment. Most feminists, she says, 'would be cautious about crediting women with a higher morality than men as if women would be able to avoid conflict were they to attain comparable positions of political power'. African theologian Mercy Amba Oduyoye has forcefully argued for the recognition of links among peace, justice, and the experience of women, writing that disparities in wealth, power, and responsibility have often resulted in the feminization of poverty and the multiple oppression of African women. 'Fear and the machine

gun will not bring about a new society; only a qualitative change of heart towards justice and love will give us peace' (Oduyoye, 2004, p. 41). Women are essential partners in the embodiment of a holistic approach to justice, peace, and ecological harmony.

On the international level, feminist and women's groups have long been involved in peace work, and their commitment to conflict resolution, anti-militarism, and advocacy for human rights and development has expanded the definition and agenda for peace beyond 'non-war.' Transnational feminist networks such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women Strike for Peace, and Women in Black show the power of collaboration in challenging traditional political and gender orders and working for structural and societal reforms (Moghadam, 2001). A benchmark work by Brigit Brock-Utne (1989) expands the agenda further. She argues that only as rigid socialisation into traditional sex roles of masculinity and femininity are examined and reframed can peace in families and communities be achieved.

Toward the Peaceable Kingdom

The power of religion to inspire or restrain violence is what R. Scott Appleby has described as the 'ambivalence of the sacred'—the dual capacities within religious impulses to promote with 'militant vigor' both the welfare of the other and to work against the other (Appleby, 2000). These same themes are explored in Steffen (2003). 'Religion can motivate and sanction violence, having the power sufficient to legitimate harmful acts in a realm of ultimate meaning and through ultimate authority,' he writes. 'In that it possess power to do these things, religion is dangerous' (p. 37). Religion has the capacity and sad history of promoting hatred and intolerance, as well as the promise to live with, explore, honor, and even celebrate difference. Religion can serve as a license for violence. It can also be a source of the courage to confront and diffuse violence. 'It is the obligation of scholars and educators to discriminate between the zeal that compels true believers to violate the rights of others, and the zeal that compels them to defend those rights at any cost' (Little & Appleby, 2004, p. 2).

One response will be a religious education beyond denominational formation that would engage with what theologian David Hollenbach describes as a theology of globalization – a spirit of internationalism expressed in a web of political, economic, social-cultural, and environmental interdependence that 'grants membership in the human community a higher value than citizenship in a particular nation state'—or any one religious tradition, one might add. Max Stackhouse, moral theologian at Princeton University, has written extensively on this same theme. The move toward a cultural, economic, and political global synthesis made possible by advances in science and information technology 'is always nested in moral and religiously held perspectives...subject to ethical and theological analysis,' he argues (Stackhouse and Obenchain, 2000, p. 6). Removing religion as one source of division within the

human community is the horizon toward which religious educators might move, pray, and have their being.

No matter the latest painful example of a failure to live out the Peaceable Kingdom brought to us on the nightly news, or the ‘not yet’ in the outcomes assessment of a curriculum dedicated to an embrace of theological diplomacy. Religious educators can still claim with integrity the potency of religious communities themselves as models of reconciliation and the power of personal friendships formed with people of other religions. As James Heft reminds, ‘When there is friendship, there is respect and the desire to be even-handed when criticisms and plaudits are offered’ (2004, p. 13). No matter the status of the deep yearnings for peace that seem so illusive in our day. The possibilities for the rich synapses of friendship, peace, dialogue, and truth can still be aborning in the personal experience of religious educators. They can be a source of the discernment, creativity, energy, and passion required for the work of remaking our shattered world. Naming and claiming our own experience in universally shared characteristics of our common humanity—our identity as Beloved, our joys and sorrows, destitute dreams and embodied hopes—these too can be part of the religious educator’s curriculum for peace. It is a noble work and calling.

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EDUCATING THE MULTICULTURAL ADULT LATINO COMMUNITY: AN AUGMENTATIVE PEDAGOGY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS

Dr. Jorge Diez

Executive Director, Hablemos de Cristo, Inc.

Introduction

Education is not a single discipline but, rather, a field of study in which various forms of disciplined inquiry interrelate. Since education is a field of inquiries with established purposes, methodologies, principles, and philosophies, then, religious education, as a field of inquiry, requires an amalgamation of several educational theories for fashioning appropriate educational approaches to meet desired goals and objectives. Educational theory is useful for laying down different teaching designs in relation to the educational environment in which religious education takes place. Theory assists in channeling what is considered essential for the content of religious education such as identifying the appropriate process for recognising objectives and relationships that should exist between scope and process. Theory has the power to bridge the gap between research foundations and the field of practice.

In this essay, the integration of several educational theories designed for a specific purpose is addressed as an ‘augmentative pedagogy.’ The principal theoretical objective of this augmentative pedagogical religious educational approach is to transcend the limits placed by theory for defining its utopian philosophy. An augmentative pedagogical approach adapts different theoretical principles in a way that can be translated into practical opportunities. Therefore, an augmentative approach to education must break barriers and dissolve the rigidity among philosophical theories to construct bridges of interaction. It must soften theoretical boundaries to create educational environments of implementation. This approach to education endures and widens the dialogue between theory and practice. Fenstermacher and Soltis (2004) state that, ‘what appears to

be mutually exclusive or inconsistent in theory is not always that way in practice' (p. 73).

One of the goals of using an augmentative pedagogical approach to religious education must be to supplement and harmonise the general goals of religious education. In a multicultural setting, therefore, an augmentative pedagogy is a complement to education that contributes to the bonding and strengthening of religious education programs to properly serve the needs of diverse communities. Thus, the goals of an augmentative religious education must go hand-in-hand with the general goals of religious education. For instance, in fashioning a religious education program for peace and justice, theories of education, sociology, and history should be placed into dialogue to more suitably approach the theme. In designing religious education programs for children, an augmentative pedagogy, besides theories of education, can be used to integrate theories of child-development, family education, classroom teaching, and so on. In other words, an augmentative pedagogy is an education specifically designed for particular situations. Therefore, in teaching an adult multicultural Latino community, it is proposed that theories of inculturation, multicultural and adult education are principal foundations for fashioning practical religious education designs to offer different perspectives to religiously educate diverse adult communities.

The impetus to use an augmentative approach that integrates inculturation and multicultural religious education in diverse adult Latino communities is to evade the possibility of producing an intense ethnocentrism that promotes separatism and segregation. This type of augmentative approach to education integrates and invites all ethnicities to genuinely be part of the whole, to be one in diversity. Members of the community must be willing to learn and share from their own heritage and be ready to participate in the learning experience of the larger religious community. Multiethnic and multicultural churches will do well by helping members observe how they fit and function within both their own microculture and the larger society. One task facing Christian religious education is to balance the tension between the traditional culture and the dominant culture in a way that frees members to live Christianly in both cultures. An augmentative pedagogy promotes a sensitive consciousness between the relationship of the faithful experience and the religious experience of the institutional church. This type of approach facilitates the interdisciplinary and intercultural conversation that welcomes those who have remained as outsiders.

Elias (1982) claims that the development of educational planning moves from values to needs, and from interests to objectives or purposes. All teaching design theories embrace a treatment of objectives, though the term is used in different ways. He maintains that religious education objectives should neither be stated nor pursued to ensure that people do exactly what is proposed. Instead, he insists that the development of objectives aimed at adult religious education must be a cooperative resolve. Since objectives can be accomplished through many different courses of action, educators are faced with the arduous task of finding, establishing, creating or fashioning suitable designs. However, in order to facilitate educators in designing

an augmentative pedagogy that religiously educates the multicultural adult Latino community, educators must keep three important determinants in mind: fostering diversity, building community, and enhancing personal growth.

Fostering Diversity: A Process of Inculturation

Inculturation is a response to God's call in local languages and symbols, with diverse faces and colors dancing with joy at the native beat of people's hearts. People migrate to a 'new land' with their own cultural identity as they were created and formed. Latinos, for example, cross the borders with timeless treasured religious traditions and popular practices of expressing their vivid faith. Inculturation acknowledges the uniqueness of the people embedded in the creation of God; a creation that is multi-rich and offers infinite possibilities and complexities to be in union with God. Inculturation unites the body, soul and nature with God. 'Inculturation is the on-going dialogue between faith and culture or cultures' (Shorter, 1997, p. 11). Inculturation educates the community and develops the capacity to relate in the intermingled world of the sacred texts and culture. Through an inculturated process, the religious experience enriches itself, and upon entering a new cultural stance, it acquires an abundance of meanings and interpretations that are conjugated in the amalgamation of life experiences and in the Word of God. The Word of God is 'caught', rather than 'taught', through the witness of human beings who live its values culturally.

Joe Holland and Peter Henriot (1980) indicate that, 'culture is the medium through which the spiritual visions and energies of a society are expressed' (p. 90). To deepen the knowledge of a culture it is necessary to observe, listen, and learn from the reality of people. By knowing their socioeconomic, psychological and spiritual needs, a friendly dialogue can be established. Sometimes cultures can be extremely repellent to outsiders, while to others they can be more convivial; nevertheless, for a beneficial religious transformation, and interaction between the culture and religion, a mutual dialogue is required. Inculturation helps bring forth a 'new creation' where 'religion and culture are capable of transforming one another' (Shorter, 1997, p. 31). Inculturation can serve as an integrating medium that unites cultures with the divine, the divine and the human in one essence. Inculturation invites and welcomes diversity. It offers hospitality, thus promotes openness and servitude to better the world. Inculturation is a unifying instrument that is essential for the life of Latino communities. It functions in the midst of diversity and is a response to a call for change.

Inculturation: A Human Learning Experience

For Christians, inculturation promotes a dynamic dialogue and relationship between the church and the variety of cultures: a profound insertion of the Gospel and faith into the cultures, an ongoing process of reciprocal and critical interaction and mutual

integration. Inculturation pays close attention to human experience, and experience brings out the innermost feelings, emotions or impressions of the individual that are apprehended through personal acquaintances. By experiencing and celebrating the Gospel, the community learns and is transformed. An inculturated church aids the community in experiencing a living Jesus, a Jesus that walks in the twenty-first century, sharing and hearing experiences as he did during the road to Emmaus. During the process of inculturation, the symbolic meaning of the Christian faith may be developed, transformed or renewed, but the substance, essence, and centrality remain the same: Jesus. A faith that does not become culture is a faith that has not been fully received, thoroughly thought through, nor fully lived out (Lane, 1992).

Building Community: Multicultural Religious Education

A welcoming multicultural environment goes beyond a mere attitude of tolerance. It must include respect, understanding, forgiveness, and acceptance. In an increasingly pluralistic and multicultural society, religious institutions must speak from weakness rather than from power. A diverse community must explore the various pedagogical proposals that recognise and accommodate the needs of diverse learners by discovering reasonable 'strategies that support commitment to a preferential option for the vulnerable, economically disadvantaged, and socially excluded communities of learners' (Cruz, 2001, p. 56).

A Call for Social Justice

A multicultural religious education approach stirs and awakens intrinsic aspects of individuals and cultures necessary for a healthy mingling. By providing multicultural environments, people are exposed to different ways of thinking and behaving, offering significant insights into new ways of being. For instance, Sonia Nieto (1992) stresses that multicultural education calls for a 'critical and liberating education,' while Allen Moore (1982) adds that religious education must be redressed 'to become prophetic, challenging oppressive social structures and recovering its historic relationship to Christian social action' (p. 103). Thus, religious education must be a vehicle of protest and challenge in the struggle to revamp the existing social and economic inequities. Religious education has the 'responsibility to name social evil and to participate actively in the radical reconstruction of the social order' (Moore, 1989, p. 12). As Elias suggests, 'as education for social justice and peace becomes a more important dimension of adult religious education, theories of adult learning that emphasise the close connection of reflection and action will become more prominent' (p. 114). Therefore, the presupposition of all social systems have to be challenged, social and public organizations should be promoted to increase individual choices, and human resources should be allocated in a way that is proportionate to need. Christians are obligated to seek justice and peace in the world, just as all persons who strive to live and authenticate religious

values should, whenever possible, join all persons of good will in the effort to solve social problems in ways that consistently reflect Gospel values.

A Relationship of Reciprocity

Multicultural religious education should be regarded as a relationship of reciprocity in that all participants should be involved in the teaching-learning process. For instance, the hierarchical method of the authoritative teacher and the dependent learner is not adequate because instead of engaging in the experience of learning, students become the recipients of information. Thus knowledge is transferred but not created (Freire, 1970). In multicultural settings, the learner must be considered as a transformative partner who is fully involved in the teaching-learning experience. An education that brings diversity together strives to dissolve the rigid distinctions between teacher and learner by impressing on the community a strong sense of equality, respect, and mutuality. There must be a link between teacher, content, procedure, and learner, and it must be based on the experience of both the learner and the teacher, not only on a culture imposed on the learner. Therefore, the learner must have a substantial input in the elaboration of curricula.

A Source of Integration

Multiculturalism needs an adequate theory of culture that can conceivably be generated through comparative analysis and dialectical conversation:

It is not just a matter of socialising, belonging, communicating, and interacting; it is a matter of social responsibilities, of loyalties and solidarities, of deep commitment to the other human beings, to groups, and to society within the bonds of freedom and dignity (Jenkins and Kratt, 1997, p. 72).

Aspects of culture strongly grasp distinctive values and ways of viewing reality. Since religious values supply the basic social cohesion that makes a society righteous and enduring, then, one of the functions of multicultural religious education is to ascertain that the multiplicity of values found in diversity are integrated into the whole spectrum of religion. In this sense, a multicultural religious education is an emancipating or liberating experience. Multicultural religious education welcomes diversity but also challenges it. During this comparative and dialectical process the community begins to grow and transform itself by becoming a stronger community instead of a victim of circumstances. An innovative religious educational pattern must convey 'a sense of the *interplay* of cultural visions, values, and practices: participants experience a genuine cultural mutuality and come to be characterised by it' (Foster, 1987, p. 95). The interaction between two or more cultures must reciprocate in nature and must be integrational.

A Symbiotic Praxis

All cultures must be both givers and receivers. This is also true of the contact between church and culture. Their contact must be mutually beneficial, otherwise, it may prompt people to seek a different religious community, philosophy or religion, to fill that void. Differences of opinion are healthy symptoms in a multicultural environment. It is a natural reaction to reject those who do not please us. It is imperative, however, that a mutual dialogue, a conversation among diverse groups, be established in order to bring forth the richness of the 'other.' Multiculturalism seeks a resolution in which each culture respectfully 'visits the preconstructed constraints and genius of the other's way of seeing the world, and each transforms its attitude about the possibility of solutions that preserve the integrity of both' (Kegan, 1994, p. 318). Multicultural religious education rejects a purely assimilationist approach; on the contrary, it recognises the importance of diversity, the interactions with people, recognition of cultural identity, a reflective action, and the increasing awareness of multiculturalism. It fosters community in innovative ways, such as 'unity in diversity,' that transform relationships and understandings, particularly since learning values is much more than developing educational programs.

Equality Among Diversity

Just as a multicultural approach to education exalts the particularities of each ethnicity and history as equals among diversity, a multicultural congregation requires an authentic incorporation, communication and collaboration by discerning and integrating differences that provide healthy environments amidst tensions. Such a multicultural religious education respects the interplay of cultural experiences and allows people to claim their own identities and respond to the identities of others. Furthermore, religious education must be holistic, joining together cognitive, affective, and everyday life learning. Only in this way can religious education be truly religious. Multicultural religious education requires that the learner not only know about other cultures, but also have positive and loving attitudes toward those cultures and their members. Learners need to capture in their own lifestyle significant human and religious values derived from other cultures (Lee, 1971). For Christian religious educators, for example, an important task is to first 'focus attention on how better to combine knowledge, affect, and action in ministry, and second, how to more adequately educate Christians for ethical responses to the crucial issues of diversity' (Jenkins and Kratt, 1997, p. 67). A balanced equality begins with first recognising the 'other.'

A Teacher/Learner Transformation

Multicultural education must respond to the needs, interests, capabilities, goals and histories of the learner. The learner should be at some centre of the instructional activity. The teacher strongly contributes to shaping the conditions of the educational

environment, providing a personal, living encounter between the learner and God. The teacher is mostly responsible for nurturing a developmental process of relationships, contributing to the fashioning of the multicultural educational environment. Multicultural religious education must be *proactive* and *engaged*. Its content, objectives, and methodologies, must engage people in actively shaping their present and future conditions rather than passively responding to the subtle dogmas of the past. Multiculturalism must respect, celebrate, and nurture diversity.

The Multicultural Educational Environment

It is in creating adequate educational environments that a community may learn about its diversity and find its collective, transformative, and evolving identity. 'When individuals realise that there are alternative ways of thinking and interacting, they see that their own culture is not intrinsically superior, nor are others necessarily inferior' (p. 59). The educational environment must be fashioned by forming nets of experiences that contribute to the construction of communal surroundings, to living life fully and abundantly, and to finding joy in being creative. The educational environment utilises creativity in exercising the gifts and charismas that allow people to experience both failures and successes. The educational environment fosters free will to expand and magnify the lives of people, and the educational habitat enriches and transforms itself in a way that is fertile, welcoming and appropriate. Each individual, each culture, has a unique richness to contribute to the development and understanding of our surroundings. They each have their own gifts to offer. To overcome a tarnished mode of tolerance, it is necessary to experience acknowledgement, recognition, intensive interaction, connectedness, belonging, celebrating, listening, forgiving, acceptance, responsible engagement, integration, and committed stewardship. 'Christians from various cultures, learning from each other, can help bring Christian faith to a fullness that its immersion in a particular culture is unable to achieve' (Wilkerson, 1997, p. 4).

Enhancing Personal Growth: The Adult Learner

The Meaning of 'To Teach'

In approaching an educational method for a multicultural Latino community, it is most advantageous to explore the meaning behind 'to teach.' Questions that aid in clarifying this meaning must be raised, such as: Is teaching a solely normative activity? Can teaching be considered within the scope of formal and informal education? Is schooling the only form of teaching? Are teaching and learning two separate activities? Should religious education consider utilising other 'life-forms'—family, work, leisure—other than schooling? Is religious education a lifelong affair?

Maria Harris (1989) suggests that, 'what is needed is a way of understanding, and speaking about education, which, while taking children and schooling seriously, refuses to collapse the meaning of education into the work of children that is done

in school' (p. 40). Educating is a process of teaching-learning that involves the whole spectrum of society. Moran (1989) proposes that 'any effective teaching of a religious way of life requires a range of settings for teaching: family, in the religious congregation, in the struggles for justice, in the contemplative silence, as well as in the classroom' (p. 3). Consequently, adult education belongs to the main field of education, and should not be treated as a separate or discrete subject of education. Many religious educators are favoring a lifelong religious educational journey that engages the community in diverse and pluralistic dialogues, finding order in chaotic situations and creating inclusive environments that are sensitive to culture, age and gender, and are further responsive to the experiences, needs and interests of the community. The walk across the threshold of a multicultural environment exposes peoples' thoughts, ideas, traditions, values, and the like, to public scrutiny.

Education 'is a work especially concerned with the creation, re-creation, fashioning, and refashioning of form' (Harris, 1989, p. 40). Form is the actual shape of content. If education is form-giving, then a goal of education is to approach the current reality by capturing and analysing lived experiences, fashioning and refashioning them into a form that is comprehensible and transformative for both the teacher and the student. The teacher and student are re-shaped during an educational encounter.

The field of education must be composed of many languages or forms of expression that evoke dialectical interactions. Religious education must provide adequate environments where the human race can comfortably converse and nurture opportunities for dialogue, thus, aiding in the conceptualization of discrete information. A good teacher teaches by optimising both apprenticeship and coaching methods. Teaching is to 'show' the 'how' of the complex life. One way of showing the how of living is by design. To teach by design refers to a design or designs that teachers utilise. During the process of showing how, the teacher analyses an already existing design and proposes a redesign. Consequently, the intention of to teach somebody something unavoidably attempts to inflict some kind of design. In other words, in the act of to teach, a teacher discovers that every human design is a redesign. Therefore, 'the best that a teacher can do is work with student and environment to improve the present design' (Moran, 1997, p. 59). The most efficient teacher is not the one who begins by laying down examples, but the one who is an example.

Three Prominent Teaching Styles

Learning styles can be thought of as descriptions of individual learning personalities. 'A learning style is the consistent pattern of behavior and performance by which an individual approaches educational experiences. It is deeply embedded in the personality and reflects how a person views the world' (Bainer and Peck, 1997, p. 295). How teachers view their role and goals as teachers has a great impact on how they structure their teaching. Furthermore, the approach teachers take to their teaching has a great effect on what they do as teachers.

Three basic concepts or approaches to teaching that have been very influential and are currently used by most educators in the United States, are the executive approach, the facilitator approach, and the liberationist approach. These three perspectives have consciously or unconsciously aided educators in their ever-challenging educational tasks. The executive style observes the teacher as an executor, a manager of a complex classroom, 'a person charged with bringing about certain outcomes with students through using the best skills and techniques available' (Fenstermacher and Soltis, 2004, p. 5). The facilitator style places substantial emphasis on incorporating the student's prior experience into the learning activity. This approach views the teacher as an empathetic person charged with helping individuals personally grow, to reach a high level of self-actualization, understanding and acceptance. It concentrates on developing authentic individuals through personal and meaningful educational experiences. The liberationist style considers the teacher to be a developer of minds, a liberator, and sometimes an emancipator, 'one who frees and opens the mind of the learner, initiating him or her into human ways of knowing and assisting the learner in becoming a well-rounded, knowledgeable, rational, and moral human being' (p. 5). These three teaching styles are derived from different philosophical principles. In theory, according to Fenstermacher and Soltis, it would be impossible to combine these styles; however, in practice, elements of each style can be utilised to fashion a more relevant educational style.

A Culturally Conscious Education

A culturally conscious religious education must promote rather than restrain minority learners' success and spiritual development. Bainer and Peck (1997) indicate that minority groups should not be observed as victims of inescapable situations who are less capable of difficult learning, or are crude and less sophisticated than other learners. They suggest that educators be confident in minority learners, and insist that they are capable of overcoming obstacles by providing them with challenging ideas and tasks. According to them, education must respect the incredible task that minority learners engage in when coping with two cultures. The culturally conscious religious educator must utilise instructional skills that are effective with minority groups. What traditionally might have been considered sound teaching in a majority cultural situation may not necessarily be an effective teaching technique in a multicultural setting. All learners must be exposed and must benefit from the educational endeavour.

Designing Parameters for Multicultural Adult Religious Education

An effective educational design corresponds to the merging of a carefully developed theory and a successful practice. Any approach to education cannot exist isolated from its environment. Since the educational components of inculturation, multicultural and adult religious education cannot be separated from the broader

field that it serves, individuals seeking religious knowledge or growth can find excellent learning opportunities in the context of a religious tradition or within a faith community. In preparing educational programs for Latinos, some important elements, or design parameters, must be seriously considered.

1. The learner's personal experience must play an important role in designing adult religious education programs. Adults filter new information, experiences, and feelings through the memory bank of their prior experiences. People are better prepared to learn something when they experience a need to learn it. It is impossible to separate adults from the wealth of experience they bring to the learning situation. Since adults bring prior experiences to the learning situation, recalling and examining them will aid in determining the right course of action to attain success in the new learning experience. Adult learning is not expected to take place without the integral component of the participants' reflection on their own experiences. Through the sharing of experiences, participants hear each other's stories, make connections with their own lives, and reorganise the knowledge generated in the exchange.
2. Flexibility in redesigning programs must always be reiterated. The educator's role requires flexibility and openness to an educational design that transcends well beyond the role granted by the traditional teaching design. Flexibility aids in accommodating the educational environment, and promoting inclusiveness.
3. The teacher must be a co-learner in the teaching-learning environment. The major strength of a teaching design is its ability to provide an organizational structure in which both the teacher and learner can plan their activities.
4. Integrating needs, interests, and values are solid foundations for a healthy multicultural educational environment. A pillar-based educational structure is the amalgamation of people's needs and interests in the teaching-learning activity. Both teachers and learners must be clear on the details of the process. Hence, both teacher and learner become co-artists in shaping the educational design. Educators must be aware of their own values and the values they wish to promote through education without forgetting the richness of the 'other,' and by addressing broader social issues, educators can gain perspectives and insights into how to meet needs at more personal levels.
5. It is crucial to pay attention to the learner's satisfaction. The very nature of adult education requires paying close attention to the satisfaction and value that the learner places upon his or her individual learning experience and whatever is learned during the experience. Furthermore, satisfaction is a good point of reference for evaluation in which planning, teaching, administration and facilitation may be assessed. It must be kept in mind that effective teaching designs are derived from the integration of sound theory and thoughtful practice that are closely connected to the environment as well as to its foundational roots.
6. Educators need to be aware of the traditions and social environments of each particular group in which they serve. For example, the local organism of

a parish or congregation breathes life from the local needs of the community. An adult religious education model that merely presents official teachings, and blocks the freedom to explore and study the individual and communal experiences of its people, cannot hope to meet the needs of those who desire greater participation, freedom, and plurality in their religious experience.

7. The uniqueness of each group present in the educational environment contributes to the fashioning of strong foundations. Considering the plurality and multiculturalism of societies where hostility, insensitivity, oppression, and segregation may exist, adult religious education must exercise a prophetic attitude to balance all aspects that make the 'other' 'inferior.' Elias (1982) insists that, 'The more the incongruence between the individual and the environment, the less is the possibility that the person will be involved in adult education' (p. 98). A connection, therefore, must exist between each particular group, the individual and the learning environment.
8. The fostering of interinstitutional relationships is vital. The whole community must be involved in religiously educating the community. This implies that institutions other than the church must be integrated as part of the religious educational environment.
9. The encouragement of active participation consolidates religious education. Participatory action solidifies 'the coming together,' and makes it more meaningful. As Beverly Cassara (1987) states, 'Participation is an important adult education idea – a powerful democratic idea that enables social groups, deprived of education and economic and political advantages, to gain some mastery over their own development' (p. 1).
10. The awareness of social concern is imperative for obtaining a better understanding of the educational environment. Christian religious education cannot be isolated from social concerns. Religion, by nature, is social. Therefore, the content of religious education must integrate components of community and social action. The religious learning process begins with where people are. Through praxis, the individual develops an awareness that triggers critical thinking for social transformation.

Therefore, to be truly effective, adult religious education, multicultural education, and inculturation must be sensitive to the whole social context within the environment in which education takes place. Religious education programs need to focus on concerns that interest all members of society. Religious education must be made visible and available to the entire community. All members of the community must be offered the opportunity to learn and understand Christian faith.

Inculturated Christian Religious Education

For Christians, inculturation is a mutual adoption of Christ and culture, an integration that renews entire aspects of humanity through the paschal mystery. The Gospel must drape itself with cultural flesh, just as the Son of God suited himself

in human flesh to conjugate God's Word. The reciprocal adoption conforms to the Christian family, and the Church is transformed and guided by the active divine seed, planted so as to flourish in the fertile land of culture. Inculturation is not simply about the imposition or adaptation of the Gospel to local situations. Inculturation goes beyond a relaxed position where it simply coexists with faith and cultures. The process of becoming inculturated involves the praxis of the whole community. It is a unifying effort of inclusiveness, hospitality, welcoming, accepting, empowering, delegating, loving, caring, to name a few. This new emphasis emanates from the depths of the culture's soul and the seed of the Gospel that gives birth to an unprecedented beauty.

The inculturation of the church is the integration of the Christian experience that not only expresses itself 'through elements proper to the culture (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a new creation' (Arrupe, 1981, p. 173). An inculturated religious education approach aids religious institutions in developing an interest in the other, a sense of openness, more cross-cultural skills, and a willingness to include the other while avoiding an education that is exclusively Euro-centric.

An Inculturated Multicultural Education

The field of multicultural education approaches religious education by considering people's present situations and by helping each different group or culture to retain its identity. 'The Gospel of Christ does not exist in some kind of *a priori* pure state or a historical pristine condition, waiting to be applied' (Lane, 1992, p. 9). On the contrary, the Gospel has evolved through the centuries among diverse people, taking on different forms, responses, and inculturated effects. Shorter (1997) highlights that, 'The death and resurrection of a culture under the influence of the Spirit of Christ cannot be definitive until the end of history. The dialogue between culture and the Risen Christ is an on-going process' (p. 85). 'Every act of inculturating Christian faith must involve a dying and rising, a dying to the old cultural forms so that the substance of the faith may reappear in the new cultural form' (Lane, 1992, p. 19).

When learners relate to the context of their own situation, all the meanings and practices introduced by the religious educator will provide new perspectives for the educator. For the multicultural community, ethnic identity issues are of extreme importance. So, 'As a part of the Christ's community, individuals are accepted fully and are freed to be their own, full selves. Thus their personal identity is authenticated and accepted' (Wilkerson, 1997, p. 45). 'If the church is to be faithful it must be formed and ordered from the inside of its experience and confession and not by borrowing from sources external to its own' (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 15); otherwise, there could be serious consequences. For example, African-American and Mexican-American Catholics are leaving the Catholic Church by the thousands due to the lack of a proper inculturation process. 'These rich heritages of faith

cannot be truly expressed through the formal and rigid forms of worship shaped by Roman-European rites' (Rademacher, 1996, p. 236). A multicultural education is challenged to deliberately build theoretical perspectives and contexts found in the expressions weaved by interdisciplinary dialogue.

Inculturation conveys that personal conversion and social transformation are feasible for all. Therefore, inculturation safeguards cultures. It challenges and purifies cultures rather than destroying and condemning them. Inculturation converges cultures into a communal centre mitigating the discrepancy between the mainstream culture and the outsiders from within: the immigrant, the vulnerable, the minority groups, such as Latinos, and so on. Inculturation closes the gap that Latino immigrants experience when simultaneously living in two different cultures. Inculturation aids Latinos in remaining *in both* rather than *in between* two worlds. 'Just as the Gospel can cast new light on each human situation, those situations in turn can bring different dimensions of the gospel into new life' (Gallagher, 1998, p. 105).

An inculturated multicultural religious education includes a sharing of values, a common bond that holds diversity together. Inculturation provides a base, a root, an important foundation from which plurality and diversity emanate. Pluralism does not necessarily mean relativism. A pluralism that is engaged in dialogue and correlation with faith is far more realistic. It is a pluralism seeking a centre of unity. Without some centre of unity, pluralism will lead to chaos (Lane, 1992, p. 14, 15). Since diverse and pluralistic societies embrace multiple experiences, interests, needs and ideals, a web-matrix of these diverse elements is created through a mutual exchange that contributes to the shaping of the multicultural ethos. An inculturated multicultural religious education fortifies communities with powerful voices.

Augmentative Pedagogy: Religiously Educating Adult Latinos in Diverse Environments

Integrating the field of inculturation, while religiously educating adult multicultural communities, creates environments of equitable relationships among all society groups and aids in the abolition of segregation. An inculturated adult multicultural religious education is a source of participatory transformation, collaboration in unification, and an empowerment and liberation that celebrates a community of communion.

In a multicultural context, religious education must be vigilant to the difficulties and sufferings that weigh heavily on minorities, recognising and addressing the insufficient and disproportionate means of self-development, the lack of respect for the basic rights of freedom, and all those aspects that foreclose the transmission of spiritual responsibilities from individual to family and society. In this regard, inculturation, multicultural and adult education are instrumental mechanisms that induce praxis, create educational environments in which cultures can interact in reflective action, and bring out the beauty of each culture by creating a common faith that is meaningful to the whole community; a unifying centre. Thus, a Christian religious education method that includes inculturation, multiculturalism, and adult

education, recognises the narratives of the learners and interprets them in the light of the Christian message. It retrieves the memories of their cultural and indigenous religiosity to enable the outsiders to be full participants in the building of connectedness.

One single educational approach can never do justice to diversity. Imposing a monocultural educational approach erects a barrier, between learners and educators, which forecloses healthy religious and spiritual growth of the community. An augmentative pedagogy diminishes the tendency to evaluate the 'other' solely through dominant cultural lenses. It fosters a sense of interplay and partnership among diverse cultures by enduring genuine cultural mutuality. It respects, celebrates, and nurtures diversity to promote a healthy identity of ethnic heritage. This is a process of inculturation, a process of mutual transformation, a process that nurtures a continuous engagement of open and cordial dialogues among plurality and diversity. Religious education must adjust its programs to reflect the multicultural reality of its community, and articulate models that enable different people to live together in a context of mutual respect and care. This also applies to the Latino community which itself is multicultural.

Adult Latino learners should not be treated as recipients of knowledge; on the contrary, they must be recognised and accepted as co-benefactors in the sharing of knowledge. An augmentative pedagogical approach induces learners to actively participate and be proactively engaged in the teaching-learning endeavor. It is crucial to identify the learners' experiences as part of the learning activity to aid in the development and enlightenment of the religious interpretation of their own reality. An augmentative religious approach designed for adult learners assists them in understanding their faith in light of their personal and communal experiences, and provides appropriate environments to respond to God's call in creative ways. The active adult learner, in this approach to education, develops the capacity, skill, and ability for spiritual discernment. This pedagogy aims to bring adults to a complete and full maturity in their knowledge of their religious tradition.

A well-established multicultural ethos, based on the encounter between religion and cultures, searches for a common ground, encourages participatory actions, addresses diverging and dissenting issues, discerns the beauty of symbiotic relationships, embraces differences with empathy, and brings about a systemic change of mutual action. The multicultural environment provides an ethos for dialogical, collaborative and mutual transformation. Cultures have the tendency to encapsulate themselves, yet a well-organised religious educational environment aids learners in breaking out of these encapsulations to develop more openness for the other.

An augmentative religious pedagogy seeks to build adult communities with clear faith identities. A critical consciousness and a praxis response illuminate new avenues for building community. An inculturated multicultural adult religious education includes the personal, interpersonal, social, and political to free people from a distorted and oppressed reality that binds and prevents them from realising who they are.

Augmentative Pedagogy: A Mutual Transformative Experience

'Human beings do not invent themselves in a vacuum, and society cannot be made unless people create it together' (Shor, 1992, p. 15). And, 'just as society teaches individuals, individuals learn to improve the society through education... Society is composed by the interaction of persons' (George Coe, 1917, p. 13). In the relationship between majorities and minorities, attention must be placed on each individual as important assets in the building up of a multicultural ethos. This relationship impels minorities, in this case Latinos, to retrieve their subjugated narratives, relive their subversive memories, and codify their stories as part of a legitimate social and religious history (Cruz, 2001). An augmentative pedagogical approach, designed to integrate minorities, liberates learners' minds from the unconscious control of oppressive ideas that persistently blur their vision and deter their pursuit of true freedom. Ideas that marginalise, imprison, and incapacitate the ability to think and act, socially injure individuals by depriving them of better opportunities in life. Therefore, an augmentative pedagogy transcends limits and makes an effort to overcome the social image of a world in constant strife and oppression, where those who have power, privilege, and status, assert themselves, yet those who perceive themselves as lesser persons, accept their powerless fate.

Recognising plurality and diversity as a resource, and not as a liability, creates a healthy climate that facilitates the addressing and solving of problems, offering the opportunity for people to be heard in all decisions that affect them (R. Likert & J. Likert, 1976). A vigorous, interpersonal environment is essential for promoting religious learning in diverse communities. An augmentative pedagogy designer must find the means to act as a mediator between newly arriving cultures, and those already present, to create stances of belonging and inclusiveness. Therefore, it is not only in the macro-universal approach of being church, but also in the micro-apostolic ministry that the church can effectively serve a multicultural world.

An augmentative pedagogical approach overcomes the disguised social reality and transforms it with qualities of active freedom and human responsibility. Dominant cultural views cannot be fully accepted without critical reflection because, by unconditionally accepting them, people come to think of themselves as inferior and helpless, incurring oppressed personalities characterised by fatalism, self-deprecation, and emotional dependence. The learner becomes free of these oppressive ideas not simply by recognising them as oppressive, but by doing something about them. Through praxis, the critical link between ideas and action, the learner becomes more aware and able to proceed.

Most minority groups live in a trance, mesmerised by programmed imposed ideals shaped by the dominant culture which further blunt peoples' sensibilities from perceiving wider realities and debilitates their capacity to liberate themselves from oppressing conditions. In contrast, a critical consciousness strengthens the ability to step back from an unconscious acceptance of things and critically perceive the world, even in the midst of invasive, powerful, restraining forces that tend to distort

and oppress. An education that tries to be neutral promotes the dominant ideology of society and causes the powerless, including the poor, to succumb (Freire, 1970). So a central task for achieving an augmentative pedagogy is to assist learners in critically observing how their life has been constructed by the influential tradition of the dominant group, with such things as standards, norms, values, and rules. In this manner, it avoids accepting matters as they appear. An augmentative pedagogy invites learners to become prophetic thinkers, change-agents and social thinkers.

An augmentative pedagogy designed for adults seeks a centre of unity in the embedded sacred texts of a religious community that breathes in diversity and exhales inculturation as an integrating instrument to unify multicultural communities. This pedagogy searches for a balance guided by the religious principle in which all become equal and all are empowered to serve the world. An augmentative pedagogy brings forth elements of minority cultures to be critically analysed and considered for a mutual and communal transformation that demolishes an assimilationist-subordinated predisposition toward subjugation, fragmentation, and segregation of minorities. An augmentative pedagogy must help minorities, such as Latinos, to see beyond the boundaries imposed by a rational, individualistic, and consumerist society that throttles, thwarts, deracinates and exacerbates their possibilities of becoming full members of society. An augmentative pedagogy creates adult multicultural educational environments that nurture a collective, transformative, and evolving identity designed for both the individual and society. This is a pedagogy that facilitates an interdisciplinary and intercultural conversation in response to personal growth, the building of communities in communion, and the promotion of inclusiveness, diversity, and plurality.

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AN OVERVIEW OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Anton C. Vrame

Associate Professor, Graduate Theological Union

Introduction

One of the great struggles that the North American Orthodox Christian Churches have had in the area of Christian religious education has been the rush and pressure to organise programs and prepare materials for educating the next generation. The discipline of Christian religious education is a relatively new phenomenon, emerging in the twentieth century, but not becoming more systematic until the last few decades. In traditionally 'Orthodox countries,' without the experience of Communist rule, such as Greece, Orthodox Christianity has been part of the public school curriculum without interruption since 1833 (Perselis, 1984). There it has the same relative position as mathematics or history. In the former Soviet-bloc nations, the teaching of Orthodox Christianity is returning to public education, with large investments from both Church and State. In Greece, the challenge is to develop meaningful programs within the context of public education. In the former Soviet union and Soviet republics, the challenge is the same, coupled with building the infrastructure—intellectual, practical, programmatic—for the return of religious education. Throughout the Orthodox world, issues of globalization, secularisation, modernity and post-modernity, and especially religious pluralism have made dealing with these matters more complex. The still relatively few professional scholars and researchers—five to ten globally—in Orthodox Christian religious education also have hampered responding to these immense challenges.

In North America, especially the United States, Orthodox Christianity is a tiny minority, comprising less than one percent of the U.S. population, despite the claims and rhetoric of a much larger population (Hartford, 2003). In the United States, the environment with which I am most familiar, religion is not taught in public schools. Thus, Orthodox Christian religious education is a parochial, parish-based, program: the Sunday or Church school. In the United States, the pressure to

develop materials for Sunday school programs has outweighed virtually all other issues of Orthodox education. Again, as in Europe, there have been very few professionals, either at the academic level (scholars at the doctoral level) or within parish life (trained personnel handling education ministries even on a part-time basis). There are currently no full-time scholars of religious education teaching this field in the accredited Orthodox theological schools in North America (Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, Massachusetts, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, New York, and St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, South Canaan, Pennsylvania). This task is relegated to adjunct status. At the level of an archdiocesan, or institutional presence, there has been partial development, with small departments and few resources, attempting to guide parishes in the development of their programs. Religious education in parishes, especially in North America and Western Europe, has been largely a volunteer effort of concerned adults seeking to teach children the rudiments of Orthodox Christian belief and practice.

As a result, there have been few sustained efforts at developing a distinctively Orthodox approach to education, although at least since the 1950s the call for such an approach has continually been made. A few scholars, such as Sophie Koulomzin, Alexander Schmemmann, John Boojamra, Constance Tarasar, and George Nicozisin attempted to offer answers to basic educational questions. Building upon their work is a significant aspect of the last decade. Thus, the remainder of this article will be an attempt to offer answers developed thus far by Orthodox educators to the following list of basic educational issues: Why do we educate at all? What are we educating for? How do we envision our educational objectives? What outcomes might we expect from students?

Efforts of the Twentieth Century

In the early twentieth century, Orthodox educators adopted the approaches of others, usually Protestant, without asking questions of ourselves about its appropriateness. Nicozisin (n.d.) reports that in 1927 George Alexander recommended that with some changes the curriculum of the Episcopal Church be used in the parishes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. From his examination it was preferred of all existing other Protestant materials at the time. By the 1960s, the approach had matured somewhat and the various Orthodox communities in the United States had produced their own materials. However, we can see an academic model being employed. According to Vrame (1996), in the textbooks developed by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in the 1960s and 1970s, we can see the strong influence of an 'academic approach' to Christian education, modeled largely after the methods of the religion texts used in the public schools of Greece at that time and a bit earlier. Each grade deals with a specific topic of religious knowledge, such as Old Testament in one year, New Testament in another, and so on.

In the 1950s, the pan-Orthodox agency, the Orthodox Christian Education Commission was created to unite efforts in education in the Americas. In the texts that it created in the 1960s and later period, we see a strong liturgical emphasis. This could be seen as largely due to the influence of one of the Commission's founders, liturgical scholar Fr. Alexander Schmemmann.

By the 1980s, the Orthodox in America began new textbook development programs, spearheaded largely by the very successful effort of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. It began producing beautifully written and produced textbooks in its *Living Our Orthodox Faith* series. The original scope and sequence developed for this series was to produce materials that would lead a student from pre-school to high school. Unfortunately, because of personnel changes, the series stopped being produced after the fifth grade. Thus far, a decade later, there are still relatively few new materials for older students and the original publications from the *Living Our Orthodox Faith* series have yet to be updated. The other major publishing company, the Orthodox Christian Education Commission, has also begun revising and producing new materials. This effort has moved more slowly, producing fewer new works, as this Commission does not have the financial resources to publish materials at a faster pace.

Another issue of education facing Orthodox in the twentieth century was the adoption of the Sunday school held during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Families would arrive at the parish together. Children would go off to attend Sunday school while parents would attend the Divine Liturgy. In North America, the Sunday school was adopted without considering whether or not it was consistent with Orthodox ideas about education, involvement in the liturgy, etc.

In the 1970s, especially influenced by the liturgical renewal movement, Orthodox educators realised the Sunday school was not consistent with the ideals of greater participation in liturgical and sacramental life and, especially, more frequent reception of Holy Communion. Children were growing up, going to Sunday school and seldom attending church services. As a eucharistic community this was seen as devastating because the children have no experience of a worshipping community, except perhaps at feast days. The one practice that all adult Orthodox Christians should observe was not being practiced by children, thus not forming the habit of regular liturgical participation from a young age. At a programmatic level, children were learning that education was only for children as the education program ended at graduation from elementary or high school. Adult education programs are still fairly rare in Orthodox parishes. Orthodox educators have been trying to develop new approaches as to when education programs are held. Mostly Orthodox try to hold 'church school' at a time that does not absent them from the Sunday eucharistic liturgy. These efforts typically involve children entering or exiting the Sunday liturgy at various points in order to go to a classroom and not miss key points of the Divine Liturgy. Some parishes have attempted to adopt other times, such as during the service before the Liturgy—*orthros* (matins), or have dared to suggest other days, typically with little success. Despite the riches of Orthodox liturgical life, Orthodox families attend worship services on Sunday mornings and Orthodox parish life revolves around Sundays.

Why do We Educate at all?

All educators typically begin with the idea that education is about 'leading out' some one—the learner—(*e-ducare*), chiefly from ignorance to knowledge. There are also ideas about educating for needed skills in the workplace, personal growth, 'academic' achievement, citizenship, and more. Of course, good educational practices will involve all of them to one degree or another. But educators must recognise the implications of stating the priority of one over another, for example skills for the workplace versus citizenship.

In the area of Orthodox Christian education, we have been asking the same question. Are we educating for discipleship, deep academic theological knowledge, or merely participation in pious practices? At minimum, we could say that the answer to this question was assumed: Orthodox adults teaching Orthodox children about Orthodox Christianity. The texts of the twentieth century assume an Orthodox family, living close to and participating in a parish, following Orthodox practices. Those learners required only Orthodox information for their education. These assumptions were largely accurate and unchallenged. There was no consideration of the wider social and cultural context in which the Orthodox communities found themselves in North America. Essentially the parish community functioned as an ethno-religious enclave—a ghetto, in popular parlance—within the mosaic of the wider American milieu. Thus the textbook developers did not feel the need to develop materials for other realities. Nor did a more explicit or distinctively Orthodox approach need to be articulated. When the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese began a process of reviewing texts in the 1980s, these foundational questions were asked. However, the answers offered were just enough to begin creating textbooks once again.

Some Orthodox were aware of the problem, chiefly Alexander Schmemmann, Constance Tarasar, Sophie Koulomzin, George Nicozisin and John Boojamra, as well as others, the pioneers of Orthodox education in North America. Since the 1950s, Orthodox educators struggled to develop a distinctively Orthodox theology or philosophy of education. Tarasar (1975) reports that this was one of the stated goals of the Orthodox Christian Education Commission, formed in 1956. Some initial attempts were made, but little sustained reflection took place. Twenty years later, Sophie Koulomzin could write that the Orthodox Church 'needs to discover an approach to religious education that is rooted in the total church tradition' (1975, p. 14). The pressure to produce materials was just too great to devote time to the question. Nevertheless, a few of the pioneers began to offer some insights into developing a response to the matter.

Nicozisin (n.d.) pointed to distinctively Orthodox terminology as offering the clues for an Orthodox answer to the question why we educate. He pointed to the term *parakatheke*, to which I would like to add *paradosis*. They are typically translated as 'deposit' and 'tradition.' With both terms there is a clear sense of receiving something. A third, related, term would be *kleronomia*, inheritance. However, with the first two terms, I want to consider them under the light of liturgical use.

The *parakatatheke* is the act in the ordination of the presbyter when the bishop places a portion of the consecrated eucharistic bread symbolising Christ, the *amnos* (the lamb) in the hands of the newly ordained. For anyone who has been ordained, this is a powerful moment of reception, a *paradosis*. However, rather than seeing this act merely as an act of reception, or merely a beautiful tradition, I'd like to see it as a dynamic process of *handing forward* the living Christ to the new presbyter. The command to return it at the second coming is not a command to preserve the small cube of bread and return it stale and dry, but to present the living body of Christ—a church community—to Christ. From this we can extrapolate easily into the realm of education, wherein the teacher hands forward the living Christ to a learner, who is entrusted with keeping the faith alive, in order to be handed forward to another generation.

This is an important concept for Orthodox religious educators because we must actively consider the implications of this idea. Are we handing forward the living Christ or merely stale, dry cubes? Are we even certain that we are handing anything over at all? Peter Berger (2004, p. 34) argues that the 'taken for grantedness' of being born into and being nurtured by an Orthodox Christian parish and family no longer exists. Nearly a decade earlier, Fr. Ion Bria (1996) made an identical claim when he wrote:

the Orthodox realise that the transmission of the faith cannot be taken for granted as an automatic consequence of an uninterrupted historical succession....The gospel has to be preached and taught in every generation, in its own language and symbols. It cannot be appropriated once for all by a particular culture; it has to be liberated for new connections and new praxis (pp. 48–49).

Berger and Bria offer different reasons for their claims about 'taken for grantedness.' For Bria it is the lack of education under Communist rule in Eastern Europe. For Berger it is the loss of a unity of family life, a unity of parish experience, a unity of social life caused by increased mobility, increased wealth, increased options of American life in the last fifty years. The Orthodox population in America has felt the influences that Berger sees. Two-thirds of all marriages in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese involve a non-Orthodox spouse. Families hustle from church services on Sunday to soccer games. On the holiday weekends, families are often absent because they have traveled to some interesting locale.

Alexander Schmemmann (1983) attempted to provide a foundation for religious education by locating it within the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church. In a monograph, he identified examples of how aspects of the liturgical cycle of the Church were catechetical in nature and, as a result, 'liturgical catechesis' was the traditional method of religious education in the Church (p. 11). For Schmemmann, the aim of religious education was 'to bring the individual into the life of the Church.' This meant that education involved more than imparting religious knowledge or training moral persons, but 'edifying,' literally 'building up' a member of the Body of Christ, the chosen race, and holy nation. 'Religious education is

nothing else but the disclosing of that which happened to man when he was born again through water and Spirit, and was made a member of the Church' (ibid.). Schmemmann also identified the process by which Orthodox should educate: 'O taste and see that the Lord is good!' (Ps. 34:8). Experience before understanding, participation before explanation, was the way of catechesis in the Church.

While Schmemmann, correctly I believe, identified liturgy as central to Orthodoxy's approach to religious education, the remainder of his presentation is an explanation of the liturgical life of the Orthodox. Yet, beyond teaching about the liturgy and possibly leading to a liturgical renewal among the Orthodox in America, significant events certainly, he did not set out a clear foundation for religious education. Nevertheless, his influence was great and can be seen in the liturgical emphasis of the textbooks published by the Orthodox Christian Education Commission, as well as in the effect it had on others who have connected religious education with the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church.

Constance Tarasar is probably the most widely published and best known of all Orthodox religious educators, having been active in the field since the 1960s. She has written on a wide range of topics, presenting and expanding the liturgical perspective inherited from Schmemmann. For example, in one essay she applies the 'taste and see' principle to children's experience of worship: 'The child learns to worship through experience from the very first moments in the Church. The child's first 'understandings' come through the senses' (1983, pp. 51–52). Elsewhere (1981), she uses this principle to re-establish the connection between doctrine and liturgical experience, thus re-integrating catechesis into the life of the Church, in the fullest meaning of that phrase. In her doctoral dissertation (1989), she attempts to develop a curricular plan based on the liturgy of initiation according to educational goals and developmental levels. Most recently (1995), she has made a cogent articulation of the theology of Orthodox religious education focusing on three foundational premises: (1) theology and religious education are fundamentally of the church, (2) theology and religious education are grounded in an understanding of God in Trinity, and our relationship to God and to each other as persons, and (3) theology and religious education must be communicated in their fullness (p. 84).

Another major thinker was John Boojamra. A teacher by profession and a Church historian, he was a founder of the Orthodox Christian Education Commission, the Director of Christian Education for the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America until his death in 1999. In a foundational work, Boojamra (1989) pointed to socialization as a model for education that was 'more appropriate to the needs, theology, and tradition of the Orthodox Church, being congenial both to the nature of human development and to the nature and history of the Orthodox Church' (p. 29). While the statement itself may seem unremarkable, in its time Boojamra's thinking showed a significant development in Orthodox thinking on educational matters. First, he seriously engaged the thinking of other Christian educators, notably John Westerhoff and Berard Marthaler. Second, he strove to incorporate the works of developmental psychology, especially the work of Piaget, Erikson, and the then

in-vogue work of Lawrence Kohlberg. Third, Boojamra brought to this conversation the writings of the Eastern Church Fathers and the entire liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church. Fourth, he was reacting to what he called the 'liturgical captivity' of Orthodox education, stating that the 'Church is more than liturgy' (p. 30). Fifth, Boojamra was an active developer of educational materials, which provided him with a very practical approach and sensibility to the work of education within the life of an Orthodox parish.

Socialization is still an important concept to be included in Orthodox thinking on educational matters. In particular, it obligates program developers to consider seriously the limitations of classroom learning for matters of faith and tradition. Socialization points to the locus of family, parish and community life as the primary and proper focus of education in faith, of which classroom learning becomes one dimension and not the location of all a religious community's educational efforts.

But where is Orthodox Christian education today? Unfortunately there has not been a lot of active thinking on the question. Orthodox education continues to rely upon the ways of thinking from almost a generation ago. Kallistos Ware (2001) writes that holy tradition is not inertia, a thoughtless repetition of the past. Yet in Orthodox educational ministries, that is, the ministries of 'handing it forward,' this is precisely what we have relied upon. While the Orthodox tradition is richly capable of addressing the needs of the present era, the educational or theoretical approach to it is not. We are still operating in the 'taken for granted' mode, taking it for granted that our children, indeed ourselves, dwell in a milieu or culture that sustains and nurtures Orthodox Christian identity and culture. Some may respond that this task is easier in the 'Orthodox culture' of Greece, Romania, or Russia and the like. But under the pressures of European integration, the globalization of the marketplace, the mobility of people, the new media, the internet, etc., this 'Orthodox culture' is being radically challenged. The choices are to attempt to 'roll this back' by either setting up protectionist barriers to foreign ideas, develop sectarian approaches to our faith, or to engage the new reality and educate for Orthodox faith and identity in the new environment. The former is, at best, an untenable naïve project that assumes that the effects of modernity can somehow be minimised. The latter is the better course, also more consistent with the ethos of Orthodox incarnational theology.

In an article published after his death, Boojamra had written: 'In the twenty-first century formal pedagogy will be the single most important ministry in the Church, especially when the culture in which we have chosen to live or which we have ourselves created supports less and less what Christians deem virtuous and ethical' (2000–01, p. 147). Berger pointed out that we must just as effectively evangelise our own, as we must work to evangelise others. If we are to educate and evangelise our own for Orthodox identity, then we must engage in a distinctively Orthodox approach to education that both represents who we have been and are as a church, culture, and people and yet capable of engaging current questions and issues facing our people.

What are We Educating for?

Our next task then is to identify a distinctively Orthodox approach to education. That approach should be clear enough to avoid esoteric abstraction, thus being accessible to practitioners who are mostly amateur teachers or theologians, and rich enough to guide our pedagogical thinking and strategy. In addition, our answers to the question should be valid for childhood education and adult education.

In my work thus far, I have located that approach in the icons (Vrame, 1999). From the icons, I have argued that the aim of an Orthodox Christian education is:

to nurture, instruct, and direct each member of the community of faith—the Church—in Christian living ...(or) the life in Christ, so that each person grows ‘in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ’ (2 Pet. 3:18) and becomes ‘a partaker of divine nature’ (2 Pet. 1:4). Alternatively stated, the goal of an Orthodox education is for each person to become an icon, a living image of God, a person who lives in continual fellowship—communion—with God, reflecting a particular way—the Christ-like way—of knowing and living in the world...(p. 63).

As I like to call this, ‘iconic living and knowing.’

While Orthodox Christians often have been accused of turning to the icons for answers to questions, I have done so for three reasons. First the icons are distinctively Orthodox or Eastern Christian, and if we want to broaden our geographies it can include the Oriental Orthodox and even the Eastern Catholic. We have a unique, highly developed and integrated tradition of art, theology, piety, and liturgical practice developed around icons. No other Christian tradition can make this claim.

Second, icons are a concrete expression of a distinctive theological tradition. They are good ‘strategic practical theology’ in the way Don Browning defines this phrase. Browning (1991) argues that practical theology should work in the following manner. It should begin with ‘present theory-laden practice to a retrieval of normative theory-laden practice to the creation of more critically held theory-laden practices’ (p. 7). Using Browning’s categories, icons are descriptive theology; they are historical theology; they are systematic theology; and they lead to practical application. That is, icons describe, question, and analyse Orthodox understandings of Christology, anthropology, ecclesiology, scripture, tradition, liturgy and piety. Moving from icon as art form, which is both a practice of art and a practice of piety, to a closer study of their theology and usage, I believe it is possible to engage Orthodox education into a deeper conversation about itself.

Third, icons offer a broad educational foundation, especially in terms of epistemology. Icons, indeed like the visual arts in general, challenge teachers and learners to a more open and dynamic understanding of what it means ‘to know’ something. I believe this is consistent with Orthodox tradition, but it has been lost as we have been too quick to imitate only rationalistic, cognitive, or academic approaches to education. This is ironic because Victoria Clark (2000) has accused

Orthodoxy of having 'lost its mind' (p. 23). To know a teacher/learner must use his intellect and rational skills, but he must also use his physical, psychological, aesthetic, and spiritual capabilities. One must believe, know and do, balancing heart and mind but also including hands. Each of these requires the interplay of multiple ways of knowing, especially if we are to avoid the phenomenon of 'practicing non-believers' or the mindless repetition of practices and statements—sacred inertia. I believe it also places Orthodox education within the middle of the contemporary educational debate, from constructivist ways of teaching, more inclusive understandings of knowledge, the role of visual learning, to broader methodological concerns.

In the icons we first see, then explore the human person in fellowship with God, leading that person to a knowledge and a practice of God's intent for humanity from the beginning. In the icons we also see a community expressing in non-verbal forms what it values most highly for its members. This is not just a theory for a better Sunday school, but a theological approach to education that can begin in childhood and proceed through the life cycle into adulthood. It is not just pedagogy or andragogy in their most technical definitions, but truly 'hypostagogy,' the education of the person for personhood, as theorised by Boojamra (1991). An iconic approach invites us to look at the person, the community, and the person-in-relation then consider the processes by which our ideas persons and community interact so that our educational objectives may be reached.

What are Our Educational Objectives?

Following Thomas Groome (1991, p. 2), I have argued that Orthodox education should 'inform, form, and transform' learners. In my proposal, all members of the community are envisioned as learners and teachers, because humans are created for growth and none of us can cease growing in faith. Without going into too much detail, let me explain this three-fold set of objectives.

Being informed is self-explanatory. Orthodox Christians should be well informed Orthodox Christians, from the basics of reading the Bible, knowing the basic stories of Christian faith, naming the sacraments, *growing* into the details of explaining the particulars of the Ecumenical Councils, Christology, ethical decision making, and moving beyond.

An Orthodox Christian needs to know 'about' his or her faith tradition, being able to state concretely its articles of faith and concern. It is no longer sufficient to practice the faith without some ideas about why and how these practices came to be and continue to be followed. Religious educators today should not underestimate the significance of acquiring religious knowledge. In the multi-religious environment that already exists in the West, it is critical that a believer be able to articulate the basic tenets of his or her faith tradition. This is not meant to be a defensive or apologetic strategy. But as a religious minority in North America, it is not enough to say being Orthodox is 'just like being Roman Catholic, except that our liturgy is longer and we don't accept the Pope.'

To be formed is to recognise that Orthodox have a distinctive *way* of being Christian. This way of being is different from other Christian ways of being or other religious faiths. Boojamra (1989) remarked that the historical approach of Christianity to education was more formational than informational. Indeed, the classical concept of education, as *morphosis* and *paideia* has much more to do with being formed as a person than only being informed (Jaeger, 1961). The lived, formational, reality of Orthodox Christianity involves liturgical styles, norms for piety, reading Scripture, etc. This 'way of life' utilises the information that is common to all Christians and shapes the Orthodox approach to understanding the information. Merely knowing about Orthodox Christianity without lived expression – *being* Orthodox or *practicing* Orthodoxy – is also inadequate for the handing forward of the living Christ to another generation.

In fact, Orthodox Christians are probably formed before they are informed. The practices of childhood are not easily changed, from church attendance, pious practices such as fasting on certain days and seasons, and the veneration of icons, to sacramental participation and prayer. Being formed also makes a typical Orthodox Christian more comfortable with the practices and able to moderate them to meet a particular issue or need, for example, relaxing a fast day because of a medical need. This points to a challenge that many Orthodox have with the 'converts' to Orthodoxy, who behave seemingly 'more Orthodox than those born Orthodox.' Many converts have been well informed as Orthodox Christians, but have not been well formed—a process that takes time. Meanwhile, the so-called 'cradle' Orthodox Christians are usually well-formed, but not well-informed. To be formed requires belonging to and participating in a community over a sustained period of time, wherein one is socialised into the norms and mores of that community. No one can be formed outside of some kind of community, whether it is a family, a parish, a monastery, or a school.

Being formed by and in a community requires an expanded understanding of curriculum, beyond the printed textbook to the entire life of the community. While the life of the community may not change dramatically in this view, our intentionality about community life and our vision of it may change as curricular questions about communities begin to be asked. As Maria Harris (1989) writes, 'The church does not have an educational program, it *is* an educational program' (p. 47). The post-Pentecost first Church offers a description and model for our expanded curriculum today:

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers....And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes; they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved (Acts of the Apostles 2:42–44).

In the community, the parish, we learn how to be an Orthodox person and Orthodox community through our particular forms of worship and sacramental life (*leitourgia*), the way we organise ourselves and live among one another (*koinonia*), the way we serve one another (*diakonia*), including whom we serve and do not serve, the way we talk about or witness our faith to one another (*martyria*), and the value we place on learning and teaching (*didache* or *matheteia*). If we consider the life of the community as the curriculum, our evaluation of the explicit, implicit, and null curricula, as described by Eisner (1979), taking place in our communities can become a very clear measure of our efforts to hand forward our faith.

The explicit curriculum is what we expressly say that we teach and do. The explicit curriculum of all Christians is basically the same. It is the life, example, and teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church. It is the content of the Scriptures and the centuries of commentary and doctrine that has emerged to shape a Christian understanding of the person and ministry of Jesus Christ and its implications for human existence. Of course, each Christian communion has developed its own set of teachings and doctrine explaining these matters, but all Christians begin from the same point. For example, the Orthodox Church will focus on the development of doctrine emerging from the period of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, while Protestant Christians may begin from the days of Martin Luther.

The null curriculum is a bit of a paradox. It is that which we do not teach, which also teaches something. In Orthodox Christianity, we do not teach about the infallibility of the hierarchy because it is not an Orthodox concept. A congregational community will not teach hierarchy at all. In both cases, the student learns something from what is not taught.

The implicit curriculum has two dimensions. First, it is that which is taught by the way we teach or do something. Second, it is the value system at work or the kinds of knowledge we value—rational or behavioral, which affect what our students learn. For example, in an Orthodox explicit curriculum, we may study the teachings of Christ about serving the poor and less fortunate, then the lives of the saints who helped others. No Orthodox educational program would object to this concept being taught in a parish. But what if the parish does not actually serve the poor? The lesson taught is that this may be something Jesus did but not really required of an Orthodox Christian today. Also, what if a service ministry only serves an Orthodox person, or does not attempt to serve a person of a particular race, religion or ethnic background? These would be examples of the implicit curriculum at work. Implicitly what has been taught is that Orthodox Christians only reach out to certain kinds of people.

Finally, Orthodox Christians are called by God to be transformed into God-like beings, living and knowing as God intends us to live. We call this *theosis*, deification, or divinization. Drawing from these concepts from the icons, we might also call it iconic living and knowing (Vrame, 1999). In the ongoing education of personal life, personal study, community life, sacramental participating, an Orthodox Christian learns about, learns how to live and know as God intends each believer to live and

know. In hopefully ever ascending spirals the Christian grows more rooted in his Orthodoxy even as he grows more expansive in his embrace of the world around us.

This manner of viewing Orthodox education aims at having the Orthodox become involved in multiple layers and manners of educational ministry and practice, from parish to colleges and universities. In and through them, there are many outcomes that we hope to reach with our students. I will now share a few general outcomes, skills, or attitudes that we hope our educational practices will nurture.

What are Some Outcomes of Orthodox Christian Education?

Faithful but Open to the Commitments of Others

The Jewish religious educator Michael Rosenak (1987) asks the following question, which I believe is germane to the challenge for Orthodox Christian education: ‘How *does* one really educate a young person, really *help* a young person to become loyal, disciplined by the regimen of revealed norms, and at the same time, curious, open and endowed with an expansive spirituality?’ (pp. 256–257). Teachers and church leaders hope that their efforts at Christian education will lead to a faithful Orthodox Christian. They hope that their students will be able to express their Christianity, both in word and deed, adhering to the norms of Orthodox practice while simultaneously being able to articulate some ideas about why the practice is observed. This is needed to combat the ‘taken for grantedness’ that was mentioned at the beginning of this essay.

Additionally, in the multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic milieu that is North America, they also hope that learner will be able to listen respectfully, attend to the faith commitments of others, and be open to the possibility of learning from another. Anastasios Yannoulatos (2003) writes: ‘If we are to promote the development of a global community we must have a genuine understanding of the most profound pursuits and intellectual accomplishments of other cultures. This includes understanding their religious achievements’ (p. 43). A civil society must allow for the free expression of religion, but also nurture a spirit of religious tolerance and respect for diversity. One of Orthodoxy’s great educational challenges, one that I fear we are not doing very well at, will be on this point. Can Orthodox be successful educators without resorting to triumphalism, arrogance, sectarianism, or worse yet, open condemnation and rejection of people of other faiths and backgrounds?

Community Builders, Leaders, and Servants

Orthodox educators should hope that their educational efforts lead to the development of the body of Christ, from the smallest unit—the family—to the largest—the culture or nation where appropriate. Building the body means that all aspects of the life of the church—clergy and laity—together share in the common work of the kingdom of God. All have the potential to lead through service. All are servants, even as some are appointed leaders with power, responsibility, authority,

and accountability. In North America, where a strong spirit of volunteerism has existed historically and religious communities receive no government support for their religious work, education, by necessity, should foster greater community involvement. Through the educational enterprise, teachers and leaders hope that their students and members will take on roles of responsibility and leadership in their communities, from getting involved in parish committees to studying for ordained ministries. One of the ongoing challenges is that many lay community leaders are not well-educated in their Orthodoxy, when many who are well-educated either are not asked to become involved or stay at the margins, refusing to get involved.

Recognise Theological Knowledge as but One Dimension of Christian Knowledge

Typically, Christian knowledge has been narrowly defined as 'religious knowledge.' An Orthodox educational vision must find ways to connect religious knowledge to other forms of knowledge, from the arts to the sciences and make these connections at multiple levels, from the everyday, the professional or vocational, to the expert theologian.

At the vocational or professional level it could take the following form. I would like my physician to be well informed to practice medicine, but also well formed by the values of the medical community and his or her faith tradition, and hopefully transformed by them. I would like my physician to be a good doctor, but also have a relationship to the ultimate Physician of souls and bodies and recognise that there are limits to what medicine can accomplish. A pious Orthodox doctor who cannot diagnose an illness and develop a treatment plan is not going to help many people. On the other side of this, churches should be working to assist the faithful discern how God is involved in whatever vocational path they choose. A 'calling' as we think of vocation is not limited only to clergy. God calls each person to his or her profession, whether policeman or physician.

At the level of the discipline of theology and religion, it must be in dialogue with other areas of inquiry and discourse. Just as theologians have begun to explore the realm of bioethics, theologians should begin exploring the realm of information technology, sociology, anthropology, etc. This may be due to the reality that Orthodox theological scholarship thus far has been 'macro-theology:' historical, patristic, biblical, systematic and doctrinal, ethical and liturgical on 'big questions.' As macroeconomics provides theories and explanations of 'supply and demand,' or how monetary and fiscal policy policies affect national wealth, Orthodox scholarship thus far has dealt with the large sweeping issues of doctrine and theology. For example, Orthodox ecclesiology has offered the macrotheology of the 'church as communion.' On the other hand, there has been very little 'micro-theology:' pastoral, practical, or applied investigations. There is little information of how parishes and individuals appropriate the theology of conciliarity or live in a conciliar manner. Just in the area of Christian education in North America, a cadre of twenty or thirty specialists, at minimum should be developed and hopefully employed

within archdiocesan administrations and various educational ministries, including the theological schools.

Too many Orthodox theologians continue to fight battles that have already been won. The Orthodox need to develop a generation of theologians who are just as comfortable with economic or social analysis as they are with patristic nuances. The challenges Orthodox Christianity faces today require thinkers and leaders capable of what Ronald Heifetz (1994) calls 'adaptive work.' 'Adaptive work consists of the learning required to address conflicts in the values people hold, or to diminish the gap between the values people stand for and the reality they face. Adaptive work requires a change in values, beliefs, or behavior' (p. 22). While Orthodox Christianity does not require a change in beliefs, doctrines or dogmas, it certainly needs work in the areas of behaviors and policies, and the gaps between how our people live and understand their lives and the means we use as a religious community to help them understand contemporary challenges.

Authentically Strive to Fill the Spiritual Hunger that Exists Today

Orthodox educational practices should be life-giving and life-sustaining. Jesus says in the Gospel of John, 'I came that they may have life in abundance' (Jn. 10:10). There is a joke in the United States that says that theologians are people looking for answers to questions no one is asking. Orthodox people are turning to all kinds of sources for spirituality and religious communities because it is those sources and communities that are meeting their needs, answering their questions, engaging their minds and hearts. The 2004 film by Mel Gibson, 'The Passion of the Christ,' has grossed well over \$500 million. The film generated an open and very public debate in the United States about the story of Jesus and His Passion that has not been experienced in decades. People have flocked to see it and leave the theatre claiming that the film has changed their lives. Churches and church groups have bought thousands of seats and filled theaters. Many of the seats in the theaters have been filled by Orthodox Christians who were more than just curious about the film. Clergy encouraged their parishioners to see it. Some Orthodox reported that they finally understood the events of the Passion. Clearly these people have left the theatre having many questions about Christ answered that Orthodox Holy Week services, educational programs, and homilies have not. This phenomenon also points to the power of the visual in education.

Also, an Orthodox education should not become a means to manipulate others in and into a church community, but should attempt to offer a vision of life that allows questions to be asked, sources to be studied, and answers to be explored. Orthodox education should lead to Orthodox adulthood, maturity in Christ, persons who are not dependent on the whims of a spiritual guru, but capable of thoughtful self-direction in conversation with a guide, in order to deepen one's experience of the life in Christ. As St. Paul writes, the task is

to equip the saints...until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ (Eph. 4:13–15).

In conclusion, I have argued that Orthodox educators should begin by exploring the foundational educational questions, the why and what of any educational endeavor. There are also other foundational questions that Orthodox should be asking. They include What is teaching, the role of the teacher? Is there a preferred educational approach, style, or method? What is the role of schooling? How do we evaluate Orthodox education? There are also questions of adult education, life-long learning, and theological education that must be addressed as well. The questions that I have raised in this presentation – Why do we educate at all? What are we educating for? What are our objectives? and What are some outcomes we look for? – are the first questions that those responsible for education must deal with in order to guide the educational enterprise. I suggest that we locate the answer to Orthodox education in the icon of the living Christ, the artistic *parakatatheke* of our tradition, which we hand forward to each person in the life of our community.

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SECTION TWO

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION TWO: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND DEBATES ABOUT PLURALITY AND CULTURE

Robert Jackson

University of Warwick, UK

This section of the book is concerned broadly with issues of religious education and culture. The contributions reflect recent debates about the relationship between religion and culture against the background of the wider debate about modernity and post modernity. The contributions are mainly from different parts of the Western world (including Europe, North America and Australasia), with Turkey and South Africa providing links to the continents of Asia and Africa respectively.

Inevitably, some technical terms are used differently in certain countries, a point complicated by the fact that some chapters are translated into English from other languages. In particular a note needs to be made about the use in English of the term 'religious education'. In England and Wales, 'religious education' refers usually to the subject taught in state-funded community schools. This subject is not concerned with the transmission of religious culture from one generation to the next. Rather, its key goals are to promote knowledge and understanding of different religious traditions for all pupils in the common school, together with some reflection by pupils on what they have learned (QCA 2004). Thus, the chapters by Eleanor Nesbitt and myself use the term 'religious education' in this sense. Norwegian contributors also tend to use 'religious education' in a similar way, corresponding to the curriculum subject KRL (the study of Christianity, other religions and philosophies: see the chapter by Geir Skeie, for example). However, some contributors use the term 'religious education' specifically to mean something close to 'religious upbringing'. In the UK, writers would tend to use the term 'religious nurture' in this context (as indeed does the Norwegian contributor Sissel Østberg). The terminological distinction is especially important for contributors from certain countries. For example, David Chidester, writing about the situation in South Africa, explains how the term 'religious education' is specifically avoided in the context of a pluralistic study of religions in schools, conducted according

to human rights principles. Instead, the term 'religion education' is used in order to avoid overtones of nurture, instruction or indoctrination. Similarly, Bruce Grelle, in his chapter about the possibilities for introducing studies of religion into public schools in the USA, points out that 'religious education' would not be an acceptable term to describe the subject. Mireille Estivalezes, writing of the current debate in France, uses the English expression 'teaching about religion' instead of 'religious education' for similar reasons.

Some scholars make the distinction between 'non-confessional' and 'confessional' religious education, with 'non-confessional' corresponding to the kind of approach adopted in English state-funded community schools. The term 'confessional' is used in at least two different senses. The first refers to systems of education in which the sponsoring organisation (usually in collaboration with the state or a sub-division of the state, such as the *Länder* in Germany) is a religious body. The second refers to the nature of religious education itself. In this sense, the defining feature of confessional RE is its assumption that the goal of the subject is to nurture faith and that the contents of RE, and the development of curricula and teaching materials, are mainly the responsibility of religious communities as distinct from the state. It is important to make the distinction between these two meanings, since it is possible, as with some German *Länder*, to have a confessional education system but non-confessional religious education, in the sense of offering considered choice, rather than the intention of a particular outcome. In other words, there are cases in which schools are sponsored by a particular religious body, but the ethos of religious education is one of principled pluralism. It is also the case that some writers from within religious traditions, who themselves embrace postmodernity, no longer see the goal of religious education as being to foster a *particular* faith. Philip Hughes' contribution below is a case in question. Having made these points about different uses of descriptive terms, it should be relatively straightforward for readers to see from the context how 'religious education' and its variants are used in the different contributions. The contributions below are arranged under five headings.

Part 1: Postmodernity, Plurality, Religion and Culture

Part one covers aspects of the debate about modernity and postmodernity in relation to religious education in a pluralistic context. Geir Skeie's opening chapter maps the terrain and makes some important conceptual and terminological distinctions. He points out that, following an earlier preoccupation with secularisation, the main issue in religious education today is diversity of religions, worldviews and values. This shift of emphasis also reflects an increasing interest in the socio-cultural context of religious education. Skeie uses 'plurality' as a term for understanding and describing religious diversity, while he uses 'pluralism' as a normative expression, indicating where a positive evaluation of diversity is being expressed. He makes the further distinction between the description and analysis of plurality, using the term 'traditional plurality' to refer to group based religious and cultural diversity, and the term 'modern plurality' to describe (post-)modern fragmentation, functional

differentiation and privatisation with a focus on individual identity. Skeie's key point is that religious education must take on the challenge to include the context of modern and traditional plurality both in theoretical reflection and in teaching approaches. Religious education should not give 'answers' to young people, but should initiate them into the debates at their own level, so they are equipped to formulate their own views in relation to the wider debates in society, focusing on children and young people as actors and learners. This approach demands a pluralistic attitude towards different approaches and perspectives as well as a critical debate.

One of the debates that Skeie alludes to is the one about culture and cultures. Empirical evidence from ethnographic studies (see the contributions of Nesbitt, Moore and Østberg below, for example) shows the 'traditional' model of clearly distinct cultures, pictured as separate or overlapping circles, to be quite inadequate to show change over time and especially to indicate the mobility and flexibility of *individuals* in different cultural situations. This is not to imply a complete deconstruction of cultures, as with the more extreme versions of postmodernism. The notion of cultural continuity is neither inconsistent with the complex and contested nature of cultural change, nor with disagreements over the ways in which cultural pasts are constructed and used in the present. The debate should be less over whether or not there *is* cultural continuity, but over the ways in which it is conceived and represented. As well as seeing a person as part of a continuing cultural tradition, it is also possible to observe that person's engagement with material from a variety of cultural sources. Attention needs to be given to *both* of these processes if we are to give an account which coheres with the complexities of what actually happens 'in the field', as opposed to ideological statements of what people would like to happen, whether they be at the poles of traditionalism (separate and distinct 'cultures') or postmodernism (the idea of 'a culture' as a completely redundant concept). This issue of the nature of cultural continuity and change is raised in many of the contributions in this section.

In the next chapter Wilna Meijer extends Skeie's discussion by accentuating its historical dimension. She notes that in the last decades of the twentieth century a pluralistic approach to religious education developed in the schools of various multi-cultural and multi-religious societies of Western Europe. Its educational aim is the promotion of knowledge and understanding of religion in its various forms. Her key argument, echoing my own work on interpretation and reflexivity in religious education (see my chapter below and Jackson 1997, 2004, forthcoming), is that such knowledge and understanding needs to relate to the learner's personal development. In this vein, she articulates the concepts of identity and tradition that suit pluralistic forms of religious education, mainly from the perspective of the hermeneutical philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. Her central idea is that both the personal identity of the individual, and tradition—necessarily something collective and shared by individuals—are matters of interpretation and are, as such, open to change. By examining or 'recovering' one's own traditions, one may interpret them in new ways that potentially reshape oneself. By examining the

traditions of others, one may learn more about oneself. In this way reflection and historicity are incorporated in the concepts of identity and tradition, as are plurality and conversation.

The next two chapters give contrasting responses to the context of late or post-modernity in terms of views about the nature and practice of religious education. Andrew Wright expounds and defends critical realism as the most appropriate framework for a liberal religious education in the face of the complex religious and cultural plurality, as described by Skeie, for example. Whilst acknowledging post-modernity (in Skeie's descriptive sense), his normative position defends a critical realist epistemology in which the pursuit of truth is central. Wright argues that critical realism provides a context which maximises reasoned debate and allows the pursuit of truth and truthfulness whilst maintaining the principles of freedom of belief and tolerance of the beliefs of others. Such a context, Wright argues, can provide a setting for teaching and learning that allows students to articulate, to develop and to defend their own views. Wright is critical of approaches he regards as having 'loaded' methodologies, such as those that reduce religious education to the sole task of nurturing the virtues of freedom and tolerance, or which *presuppose* that religion is primarily a product of human culture. Wright is not making foundational claims for critical realism's status in relation to religious education, but arguing for it as the best working framework currently available.

Writing from within the Australian education system (where religious education is understood in the private sector as religious nurture), Philip Hughes discusses the nature and practice of the subject from the point of view of young people living in a postmodern context, arguing for a particular educational response to the plurality of late or post-modernity. He argues that approaches to religious education which continue to attempt to pass the traditions of faith from one generation to the next are no longer effective. In a postmodern environment, young people now draw on a wide range of resources, including religion and spirituality, in shaping their identities. They do this in highly individualistic ways rather than by accepting the dogma of a religious community or religious organisation. Through the globalisation of the mass media, personal travel and the multi-faith nature of most Western cities, young people have become aware of the many options from which they can draw for their spiritual well-being, and they tend to approach spirituality as consumers. At the same time, they are wary of the organisations which traditionally have been guardians of religious traditions. As distinct from Wright's view that religious education should deal openly and fairly with issues of truth in relation to the narratives of particular religious traditions, Hughes argues that the subject should now be oriented towards helping each individual to develop skills to make wise and responsible choices in selecting appropriate and personally satisfying spiritual values from a range of sources; individuals, in Hughes' view, should take responsibility for their own spiritual journey. The risks that young people will not find resources which will contribute effectively to their own well-being or to that of the wider community are great, argues Hughes, because individuals may not have the skills to find and assess them. Thus, instead of seeking to pass on one tradition, religious education

should prepare young people to distinguish between different qualities in spiritual resources, and to evaluate their authenticity. Young people can be empowered to make wise choices, maintains Hughes, through the provision of background information on the various options, and through building skills in decision-making.

Part 2: Religious Education and Values Education

Part two of this section on ‘religious education and culture’ includes two chapters that discuss religious education as a contributor to a wider values education. The term ‘values education’ here is used as an umbrella term for a range of common curriculum experiences covering subjects such as personal and social education, religious education, intercultural education and citizenship education as well as themes such as the environment and health, and issues related to the general ethos of the school (Taylor, 1998). Neither author reduces religious education to values education, but both maintain that the study of religions offers something distinctive to education in values.

Fernand Ouellet’s chapter considers the relationship between citizenship education and religious education against the background of postmodernity. Just as Skeie and Meijer see questions of individual identity as mirroring tensions within wider society, Ouellet argues that both citizenship education and religious education should act as a bridge between the student’s personal agenda and broader social and political issues. Following Galichet, Ouellet sees the contemporary interest in citizenship education as prompted by contradictions and tensions in relation to values faced both by democracies and by individuals in a postmodern situation. Rather than being a ‘comfortable’ subject in which students are initiated into a stable set of social values, citizenship education, maintains Ouellet, should be about learning to manage (and if possible to reconcile) different and sometimes contradictory values which societies and individuals use in different contexts to legitimate particular policies or practices, or indeed to justify particular conceptions of citizenship. The study of controversial issues thus has a central place in this form of education. Ouellet argues that an exploration of religion—through its symbolic systems and questions of meaning and its various responses to postmodernity—is especially relevant in helping students to come to terms with the ‘crisis in the legitimacy of values’. Such a ‘religion education’, argues Ouellet, should be set in the framework of the broad values of openness to diversity, social cohesion and equality. Finally, Ouellet discusses recent policy proposals for ‘religion education’ in Quebec in the light of his deliberations. Here we find some interesting parallels to, but also differences from, proposals and policies relating to France, South Africa and the USA, as discussed in Part 4 (below).

Liam Gearon presents some provisional and outline considerations for religious education of a new ‘human rights culture’ in the UK and globally, in part deriving from the implementation of the Human Rights Act in the UK and other international human rights legislation. Gearon argues that that religious education needs to take more account of the political implications of teaching and learning in the

representation of religious traditions. He thus aims to balance a utopian agenda for religious education with the global and often dystopian realities of cultural conflict—especially involving human rights in an international context. He urges too that particular account be should be taken of postcolonial criticism as a means of clarifying inherent power relations within and between religions and cultures, a theme taken up later by John Wright in his discussion of religion and education in New Zealand.

Readers are also directed to Section Four on Policy edited by Andrew McGrady, which also includes chapters relevant to the debates about religious education in relation to citizenship and human rights education.

Part 3: Methodology

Part three addresses issues of methodology in the fields of the study of religious culture and religious education. Empirical studies are necessary both for gaining insight into the richness and complexity of religious and cultural life ‘on the ground’ in the context of late or post-modernity, and for informing religious education theory and pedagogy. Three examples are given, all making use of qualitative, ethnographic research methods.

Eleanor Nesbitt begins by arguing that effective education (and not only religious education and citizenship education) must necessarily be intercultural, regardless of location and degree of diversity in the local population. She then goes on to introduce ethnographic studies conducted in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick’s Institute of Education in the UK. She goes on to explore the meaning of ethnography and to examine the appropriateness of religion as a framework for the Warwick studies. Nesbitt examines some insights arising from these studies, including the diversity of supposedly more homogeneous faith constituencies and the fuzziness of the boundaries that are widely assumed to demarcate faith groups. She illustrates the danger of assuming that researchers and those whose experience is being researched use and understand key terms in the same way, and then examines the extent to which young people exercise choice in their beliefs and practices—empirical evidence that informs the debate about ‘cultures’ discussed above (and also, one might add, debates about ‘religion’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘national identity’). Nesbitt shows that studies of groups within religious traditions, such as supplementary classes organised by religious communities, are very relevant to mainstream educationists. She concludes the chapter by considering some practical implications for teacher education. These include developing a critical awareness of one’s assumptions and paying vigilant attention to published resources, as well as adopting a pedagogic style that encourages an interpretive approach.

My own chapter describes the development of the interpretive approach to religious education from ethnographic studies of children from different religious backgrounds in the UK, including some of Nesbitt’s studies referred to in the previous chapter. Here, the diversity of religious practice on the ground raised questions about the nature of religions that were illuminated by literature

on the representation of religions since the European Enlightenment. Issues of understanding another's religious worldview were tackled through the application of techniques developed through a critical review of recent ethnographic theory and method. The methodology of recent social science also clarified various issues concerned with reflexivity, understood in terms of different elements of the relationship between the student (or researcher) and the examples of religion studied. Although the approach had its grounding in ethnographic theory and practice, its essentially hermeneutical nature has led to developments of the approach, starting in the classroom with key concepts or with students' questions and concerns, rather than with ethnographic data. The approach draws on the social sciences for its methods, but its outlook remains 'epistemologically open' and, as with Andrew Wright's critical realist framework, it leaves open questions of truth as well as meaning.

Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore combines a reflexive ethnographic methodology with an ethogenic method for studying community life. So far, the method, which Moore and her colleagues have adapted from the work of Rom Harré, has been used largely to study the dynamics of Christian communities within a matrix of cultures. In addition to conventional ethnographic methods (including participant observation), the ethogenic method includes 'listening to people explain their behavior, drawing upon the linguistic capacity of humans to explicate the origins and reasons for their actions'. Its goal is 'to discover influences and origins of social behavior and to understand the dynamics of social interaction'. The main focus of Moore's research has been on processes by which communities construct, transmit, critique, recreate, and transform themselves. A further element has been to consider how diverse cultures and communities teach. Moore's methodological description offers a guide for future research, as well as a qualitative approach for studying social interactions and movements, social influences on human development, and educational practice in complex cultural settings. The underlying theoretical assumptions are that: faith is understood and formed differently in different communities; differences are important to the design of educational practice; faith communities are related to religion and culture in a complex manner; and human beings are interconnected and mutually influencing. Ethogenic research centres on listening to stories. Material is collected in various ways, including formal interviews, observations, questionnaires, and informal conversations. In collaboration with community representatives, the research team 'negotiates the complexities and differences to discover the community's story, with all of its diversity'. The final phase of ethogenic research—drawing out proposals for future practice—echoes Meijer's idea of the potentially transformative nature of education through engaging with past traditions.

Part 4: Case Studies of Religion in Public Education

Part four offers discussions of cultural and political difference and debate through case studies of possibilities and problems relating to policy on religious education in the context of public education in a selection of different countries. Recurrent

themes include the debate about the nomenclature of the field (as indicated above, even the title 'religious education' is controversial, sometimes seen as inherently favouring religious interests), the political debate about the nature of 'religious education' in relation to national identity, the history of civil society and civil religion and the impact of plurality upon education. Different possibilities for the subject in publicly funded schools reflect particular histories and a diversity of views on the place of religion in public and private space, but there are also some indications of influence from broader political, religious and moral perspectives, ranging from the impact internationally of the events of September 11th 2001 in the USA and their ongoing consequences, through the transnational political activity of certain religious interest groups, to appeals to the moral force of universal human rights codes.

David Chidester writes about religion in public education in post-apartheid South Africa, a field in which he has been closely involved since the establishment of a democratic government there in 1994. He describes how, under the apartheid regime, a particular kind of Christian nationalist confessionalism required pupils to embrace prescribed religious convictions and to denigrate adherents of other religions. Chidester tells the story of the process of introducing a new curriculum for religion education (a term preferred to 'religious education') with aims that are clearly educational rather than religious. This is taking place within the context of a Constitution which safeguards human rights and forbids discrimination on religious grounds, thus ruling out any form of 'privileged' religious education. Chidester traces the processes involved in arriving at the new curriculum proposals. Current curriculum statements specify that religion education should address diversity through the study of different 'belief systems and worldviews' and that the role of religion in the public schools 'must be consistent with core constitutional values of a common citizenship, human rights, equality, equity, freedom from discrimination and freedom of religion, conscience, thought, belief, and opinion'. It is on these grounds that public schools are responsible for teaching about religions in ways that are different from the processes of religious upbringing provided by the home, family, and the religious community. Chidester also charts the opposition to these proposals by a number of Christian groups, most of which wish to see the privileged position of Christianity maintained. Chidester sees such opinions as special pleading, arguing that the new proposals are the best way forward for religion education in South Africa's schools.

Recep Kaymakcan introduces us to the situation in another country experiencing rapid change, namely Turkey—a secular country constitutionally, but with a mainly Muslim population, and with territory in both the European and Asian continents. The changing relations between religion and state, argues Kaymakcan, account for the on-going debate about the place of religious education in schools, a process accelerated by the impetus towards membership of the European Union. Kaymakcan provides information on the historical background and legal provision for religious education. He explores the main features of the traditional teaching of Islam, which he defines as an 'ilmihal-centred approach'. This included provision of

knowledge about religion in general, the Islamic religion, and ethics, as well as having a moral development goal. This approach used a classification system that divided religions by origin (whether divine or non-divine); then subdividing divinely originated religions into distorted and undistorted religions. Kaymakcan compares this with recent changes, introduced in 2000, which introduce a new and more pluralistic primary curriculum for religious education. The new approach is non-denominational, inclusive of non-Islamic religions and incorporates a consideration of the cultural dimension of Islam in relation to Turkish history. There is also a shift in pedagogical style to problem or learner centred teaching instead of content centred teaching. Kaymakcan points out that, although there is general agreement about the inadequacy of the traditional way of teaching religion, there is, as yet, no national consensus about alternative approaches to teaching religion in schools.

Using my book *Rethinking Religious Education and Plurality* (Jackson, 2004) as a foil, Bruce Grelle discusses the possibilities for the inclusion of the study of religion in public education in the United States of America. Grelle points out that the debate about the academic study of religion in public educational institutions in America is ongoing, although the subject would never be called 'religious education' since this phrase has unacceptable connotations in the context of U.S. history (cp Chidester's and Ouellet's accounts of 'religion education'). However, in the past twenty years or so, there has been some movement in the United States towards inclusion of religion in the curriculum of publicly funded schools. There is also significant agreement regarding basic pedagogical guidelines for *how* to teach about religion in public schools. Rooted in the religious liberty principles of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, these guidelines reflect current law regarding religion and public education, making a sharp distinction between teaching *about* religion in public schools and the promotion of religion. Like current English and Norwegian approaches to religious education, for example, the primary aim of teaching about religion in American public schools has been to increase pupils' understanding of different religions in history and society as well as to increase tolerance and sensitivity toward people of different faiths and philosophies. However, the approach would be wary of methods which relate material studied to students' own beliefs and assumptions and with the development of their religious or spiritual identities. This would be regarded as a deviation from the requirement that public schools should be entirely neutral in areas of religion. Grelle suggests an alternative way of making the connection between knowledge and understanding and pupils' personal lives, namely through linking religious education to citizenship education, with an emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a pluralistic democracy. 'Teaching about diverse religious and secular worldviews and ways of life', argues Grelle, 'becomes a venue for helping students understand their rights to religious liberty or freedom of conscience as well as their responsibility to protect those same rights for their fellow citizens', a view he regards as close to my own arguments about the contributions that RE can make to citizenship education (Jackson 2003; 2004).

There are some similarities with the debate about the place of the study of religions in public schools in the USA in Mireille Estivalezes' discussion of the recent debate about 'teaching about religions' in the French public education system. A century has passed since the laws on the laicisation of education prohibited religious instruction in French schools during school hours and on school premises. However, there is now serious public concern about the lack of knowledge and understanding of religions among young people in society, an issue exacerbated by a decline in the importance of the humanities in the education system as well as by the processes of secularisation. Estivalezes traces the debate since the 1980s in which the young's ignorance of religion in relation to aspects of culture such as history, philosophy and the arts became a public issue. By the end of the 1980s, the majority of the population was in favour of teaching the history of religions in schools. However, the reasons given for this were mixed, ranging from the academic/cultural argument outlined above through a desire to increase tolerance of difference among young people (both arguments used in USA debate) to a wish to transmit secure moral values. The move towards a policy change was given added impetus by the events of 11 September 2001 in the USA, and the philosopher Régis Debray was commissioned to produce a report on the topic for the Minister of Education. Debray's positive conclusions have led to a move towards studies of religion in order to promote the preservation of cultural heritage, the promotion of tolerance and the fostering of understanding of the contemporary world. Estivalezes discusses the on-going issues, including the impact of the 2004 Stasi Commission and the important question of teacher education and training.

Part 5: Ethnic and Religious Minorities and Religious Education

The final section focuses on studies of religion and religious upbringing within particular groups and communities in Western societies. The presence of religious and ethnic minorities in society has implications for religious education in a number of ways. Firstly, as Eleanor Nesbitt points out in her chapter, studies of such groups illustrate the diversity and complexity of religion in the field. Terence Lovat's examples of Hindu life show that tradition's complexity and plurality, just as Sissel Østberg's examples illustrate the distinctiveness of local Pakistani Muslim traditions. Secondly, the presence of religious and ethnic minorities also shows cultural change in process, especially across the generations and through the influence of place. This can vary from religious and cultural conservatism, as elders attempt to preserve religious and cultural traditions (as with Richard Rymarz's examples in relation to Christian Orthodox communities that have become established in Western countries such as France, England, the United States and Australia), to more progressive positions in which ideas are filtered through new cultural syntheses. The question of the relationship between religious and ethnic identity is also raised, as is the general issue of the shifting nature of ethnicity. The 'integrated plural identities' displayed by Østberg's young Norwegian-Pakistanis are a good example of the process of cultural change and contextually adaptive ethnic expression. Thirdly, the presence of minorities

provides data for religious education that can break religious, ethnic and cultural stereotypes. Ethnographic source material can be introduced, for example, through the interpretive approach. Also, when it is practicable to link young people from different backgrounds together—either face to face, within the multicultural school, or by some form of inter-school contact, such as email exchange—dialogue between those of different backgrounds can be facilitated (Jackson, 2004, Chapter 7).

Terence Lovat draws on documentary and empirical work from his empirical research conducted during the 1990s and the early part of this century. The work began by focusing on the regular adherents of a major orthodox Hindu Temple site in Sydney, and expanded to take in those more broadly Hindu-inspired groups that tend periodically to gather around such sites. The main focus among these latter groups was the Brahma Kumaris (BK). Lovat's initial objective was to identify the role and purpose of innovations in the New South Wales public curriculum centred on religious studies and values education. This important though limited objective expanded along with Lovat's own increasing appreciation of the unique world of Hindu-inspired spirituality, facilitated through visits in India, Europe, the UK, the USA and other parts of Australia. Among other dimensions, the work captured important perspectives on: religious education in a multi-faith society; the increasing need for religious and values agendas to be pursued in the public curricula of such societies; the phenomenon of cross-religious dialogue between Jews, Christians and Hindus; issues of separation, re-adherence and conversion of Jews and Christians towards Hindu-inspired movements; and the distinctive contribution to be offered to cross-religious interaction by Hindu and Hindu-derived spiritualities.

Sissel Østberg's chapter is based on two empirical studies she conducted on the role of Islam in the lives of Norwegian Pakistani children and young people. The same children and young people were studied over a ten year period. Østberg shows the everyday life of these children and young people to be characterised by a continuous movement, communication and negotiation between a secular context and an Islamic nurture managed by parents and the mosques. She first discusses the concepts of secularity, plurality and deconstruction in order to understand the context of children's and young people's lives. She goes on to analyse how meaning and social belonging are established and negotiated in this plural context. Some of the general social and cultural processes which influence children's and young people's lives as individuals and as a minority group are then illustrated by the multiple roles of the mosque and the state school in the minority situation. Echoing Skeie and Meijer's interest in identity issues, Østberg finally illustrates how Norwegian Pakistani children develop what she calls 'integrated plural identities' and how they as adolescents experience and reflect upon changes in their lives and, in different ways, seek authenticity in balancing individuality and tradition.

Richard Rymarz writes about issues in the transmission of religious values to young Orthodox Christians in a secularised society. In handing on religious values, Orthodox Christians have relied heavily on the lived experience of faith. The primary vehicle for this has been the Divine Liturgy as well as a variety of rich cultural practices. The fabric of Orthodox life, however, is challenged by the patterns of life

in modern Western democracies. Rymarz explores how Orthodox Christians respond to these challenges, with a special emphasis on the role of religious education within Orthodox educational structures. Despite a significant historical interest, Rymarz notes that religious education in Orthodox Church related settings has not been as well developed as in other Christian circles, and he suggests some reasons for this, as well as suggesting future directions.

Whereas the contributions of Lovat, Østberg and Rymarz are concerned with issues relating to minorities within Western societies whose ancestors migrated from other parts of the world, John Wright is concerned with issues relating to Māori indigenous people in New Zealand. Wright considers the implications of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi for Christian theological education in that country. Given the current centrality of the Treaty of Waitangi to all aspects of the life in New Zealand, Wright sees implications for the delivery of education at all levels, from pre-school to tertiary. He gives a brief summary of the history of education in New Zealand, and explores current delivery methods. He then provides a case study of the delivery of tertiary theological education within the Anglican Church in New Zealand, which is an outcome of a three *tikanga* (custom) Church. Wright offers some educational principles, in the post-colonial context, including the application of Paulo Freire's thought in developing a transformative education that addresses the country's particular mode of cultural diversity.

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PLURALITY AND PLURALISM IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Geir Skeie

Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Stavanger, Norway

From Secularisation to Pluralisation

A recent comparison of religious education in Germany and United States in the twentieth century shows that a preoccupation with modernity was central to many religious educators at the beginning of the century (Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003). Later, this liberal and optimistic view of culture and society met with criticism, and gradually the focus shifted towards the religious content of religious education. In the last half of the century, attention returned to the social and cultural context, and issues of secularisation became higher on the agenda in Western countries. There was also a concern about young people's 'drift' away from traditional values, their decline in religious commitment and their lack of interest in organised religion (Skeie, 2002a). Much religious education came to focus on how to teach religion to the children and young people living in secularised societies. This resulted in new pedagogical approaches, as well as curriculum changes, in many countries. Researchers became more interested in the life-world and spirituality of children, partly with a developmental perspective, and partly with a growing interest in the content of children's own philosophy of life as well as the socio-cultural context of their reflection process (Hartman, 1986; Hyde, 1990; Jackson & Nesbitt, 1993).

In earlier social science, secularisation was often seen as a necessary result of modernisation, but by the 1960s this view had become debateable. Today both the concept and the theories about secularisation are contested, partly because many researchers employ a more global perspective. The tendency seems to be more towards investigating a process of 'oscillation between secularisation and sacralisation', and discussing 'conceptions of religion and spirituality' (Beckford, 2003, pp. 71–72). Parallel to this, religious education gradually discovered that young people were interested in religious questions, in spirituality and in ethical

issues; but not necessarily in mainstream religious education in schools, as a Swedish investigation showed in 1969 (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1969). A one-dimensional concept of secularisation has therefore become less useful for an understanding of the socio-cultural context of religious education.

The secularisation paradigm was also challenged when more immigrants came to European countries from the 1960s onwards, carrying with them their religious traditions. Countries like Canada, Australia and United States, with another history and scale of immigration, experienced similar challenges. This contributed to a visible plurality in the streets, which mirrored the increasing cultural plurality of late modern societies often called 'youth cultures'. The plurality contributed to a new agenda in educational debate (Grant, 1992; Ouellet, 1988; Verma, 1989). In religious education also a new agenda appeared (Felderhof, 1985; Thompson, 1988). The focus turned towards the teaching of world religions, as in the phenomenological approach in England. Gradually approaches multiplied; and in the ensuing debate the issue of religious plurality has been central (Grimmitt, 2000; Jackson, 1982; 1997). The focus on religious diversity has become so strong that issues of secularity, and the situation of non-believers, are sometimes neglected (Rudge, 1998).

However, questions about balancing the influence of interest groups and stakeholders are only one of the many issues relating to plurality and pluralism that are discussed in religious education today. (Jackson, 2004; Ziebertz, 2003). In many ways 'pluralisation' has taken over the position that 'secularisation' used to have, namely that of expressing the main challenges of contemporary religious education. It is therefore important to reflect critically on the meaning and use of the concept.

Pluralism and Plurality

Sometimes 'pluralism' is used within the field of religious education to indicate both that there is a multitude of religions within a certain society and the concern to have an education 'for all'. We should, however, distinguish between the diversity of religions, life-stances and life-styles on the one hand, and the different attitudes towards this plurality on the other. I suggest using the word 'plurality' in cases where a description of diversity is intended, and the word 'pluralism' where the intention is to give a normative valuation of the plurality. Both the description and valuing of diversity are contested issues; and therefore it is useful to keep disagreement about description apart, at least to some extent, from disagreement about normative issues.

The relation between the perspectives of description and normativity can be compared with the drawing of the duck-rabbit. This famous philosophical animal can be viewed both as a duck and as a rabbit, but as only one at a time. The one aspect becomes background for the other and vice versa. In the same way different aspects of culture (like religion) can be seen alternatively from a universalistic (normative) or from a relativistic (descriptive) point of view by the same person. This idea of gestalt-shift corresponds to the capacity we have as human beings constantly to change our perspectives. One basic perspective-shift is when

we alternate between the role as ‘participator’ and as ‘observer’. The participatory perspective is normative and universalistic; the observational perspective is descriptive and relativistic (Skjervheim, 1976).

Taking the religious education teacher as an example, he or she should be able to present and describe different religions from a relativistic perspective in the classroom. When the same teacher comes home to his/her own children, he or she has to give some kind of (non)religious nurture. Nurture cannot be wholly relativistic or descriptive; it has also to be normative. This simple division of roles, as teacher and as parent, is, however, not a clear cut division between education and private life. Both roles, or perspectives, are integral parts of education itself.

Most religious educators today will probably agree that a strictly neutral, objective or descriptive religious education is impossible. Many would continue to say that it is not desirable even if it were possible. Current epistemology tends to see scientific knowledge as socially constructed and thus to some extent perspective-relative; educational theory emphasises that learning is a social process as well as a cognitive one. This means that what goes on in most religious education is best understood as being both normative and descriptive. The choice is not whether to be descriptive or to be normative; the real choice is whether to make this difference and tension explicit or not. It can therefore be argued that one of the main tasks of education is to make students increasingly able both to separate and to hold together the two: description and normativity. This also is relevant for our understanding of plurality and pluralism.

Pluralism as a Normative Position

While the concept of plurality is preferably to be used to indicate a state of affairs where there is some sort of multiplicity, ‘pluralism’ should be taken to indicate an evaluation of a particular kind of plurality that usually is considered positive. Pluralism can be found in several fields of inquiry and theoretical positions (McLennan, 1995). A systematisation with examples of such positions is listed below:

1. Philosophical pluralism
 - a) Ontological (James, 1977)
 - b) Methodological (Naess, 1972)
2. Ethical pluralism (Kekes, 1996)
3. Religious pluralism (Hick, 1985; 1989)
4. Political pluralism (Dahl, 1982; Ehrlich, 1982; Ehrlich & Wotton, 1980)
5. Cultural pluralism (Eriksen, 1994; 2002)

All these theoretical positions related to pluralism are in fact based on the (descriptive) recognition of plurality within their field of interest, and take this as a

basic, positive, starting point of reflection. This common feature means that there are in some cases direct links between the different types of pluralism. They also draw on quite different lines of thought, owing to their separate fields of interest as well as their different historical and intellectual backgrounds.

The fundamental opposition to the pluralistic point of view would be to see a certain plurality as non-existent, or in other words to reject plurality on the descriptive level. Without a real diversity of positions, there does not seem to be much argumentative strength in pluralism. A more common version of anti-pluralism is probably that of seeing plurality as a problem that should be solved by reducing it or transcending it, for instance by moving towards either dual oppositions or some kind of monism. Another view that opposes pluralism, and one often voiced in the debate about religions, is to argue that the plurality in question includes conflicting truth claims; and that the only solution is to choose one truth against the other possible alternatives.

In spite of the challenging and basic issues raised by different types of theoretical pluralism, the main focus in the following is on the question of plurality, taking into account these theoretical and normative positions. It is vital in the discussion of plurality to acknowledge that we cannot get completely rid of such basic attitudes even if the focus is on description.

Attitudes Towards Plurality

The descriptions of socio-cultural plurality are always in some way marked by certain attitudes towards plurality, even if they are not explicitly articulated as theories or positions. Such attitudes may be described by using a typology of three (Parekh, 1996):

1. Naturalistic attitudes
2. Rationalistic attitudes
3. Romantic attitudes

The naturalistic attitude perceives the socio-cultural diversity to be inevitable and therefore not something to be lamented. As different flowers grow out of different soil, so also different ways of living are the results of specific conditions, be they geographical, climatic, historical or other. Socio-cultural plurality is seen as a fact of life, and rather than trying to overcome it, we should acknowledge it. Plurality is a result of deep-going divisions between humans; it is not a matter of superficial differences that can be overcome. If cultures seem to overlap, this is so only on the surface level. Naturalism therefore may serve as a support for group identity within a multicultural society.

To some extent the naturalistic perspective depends on its ability to show how socio-cultural plurality stems from differences that go deep. It is consequently dependent on the elements that are thought to produce plurality. Historically it has served as a basis for segregation and assimilation as ways of coping with multicultural challenges; further, different types of racism have exploited the naturalistic

perspective. But naturalistic elements are also part of communitarian views that support the rights socio-cultural groups have to secure and develop their traditions.

The rationalistic position is based on the conviction that, despite the apparent existence of plurality, people are equipped with the same basic intellectual capacity and therefore there are possibilities of reaching a common understanding. Education is seen as an important instrument for spreading rational and critical thinking. The rationalistic attitude may be of the strong kind, maintaining that plurality should be met with an appeal to a common understanding on a more basic level.

Another kind of rationalism is weak, characterised by a more relaxed position towards plurality, and the readiness to enjoy the (superficial) benefits of plurality. The rationalism of this position is implicitly seen as the privilege of an intellectual elite. It may be called a post-modern rationalism, not insisting on immediate enlightenment, but rather waiting for the general development to move in the direction of rationalism. In the meantime, plurality is 'nice'. What connects the different rationalistic positions is an 'open' view of cultures, combined with a 'closed' view of the common human nature.

Finally, the romantic attitude starts from the assumption that human beings are more or less free, creative, persons, who have the capacity to perceive and think differently, who may have different aims in life and who try to find ways of reaching these aims. From this human creative potential a plurality of life-forms are produced and reproduced.

The romantic attitude may have similarities with the naturalistic in the sense that they both see differences as deep rather than superficial. But while naturalism has the tendency towards essentialism, the romantic view tends more towards constructivism. However, the romantic attitude also has something in common with the rationalistic attitude. They both claim that there is some kind of common human potential. In the case of rationalism this potential is mostly seen as being cognitive and allowing for a developmental process towards unity. The romantic attitude places much more emphasis on emotional or bodily experiences, and underlines the creative capacity of humans. This leads towards processes of diversification. The romantic attitude tends to adopt an 'open' view of human nature and an 'open' view of cultures. A strong version of the romantic attitude could take the form of postmodernism, while more weak versions would be critical of this 'anything goes' attitude, possibly balancing it with elements of rationalism.

I suggest that most pictures drawn of socio-cultural plurality are coloured by one of these attitudes. Descriptions of socio-cultural plurality are not merely a registration and documentation of the varieties at hand. They are also meant for a purpose. To understand plurality is a process of interpretation, and this includes both 'explanation' and 'understanding' as other hermeneutical processes do. Interpretation as a process reaches its goal in its application; or rather in the act where understanding becomes visible. Our reactions towards plurality often rest upon a 'tacit understanding' of plurality. By drawing attention to this tacit or implicit understanding, it may also be easier to deconstruct some of the rhetoric of certain situated discourses related to plurality.

Traditional Plurality

A descriptive perspective uses the term 'plurality' to indicate the existence of a variety of different religious groups and/or religious views in a specific context like contemporary Western society. The background and dynamics of this context are elaborated and discussed in a substantial literature and the necessity of understanding the issues of religious diversity as something separate from the debate on pluralism is recognised by several researchers (Beckford, 2003).

The context of religious plurality raises issues both of general interest and of specific concern for religious education such as the following:

- Questions of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between different religious communities;
- Questions of power related to the situation of religious and ethnic communities; in particular majority/minority relations and issues of oppression and racism;
- Challenges arising from the fact that most religious communities have 'border-problems' with respect to secular culture and other faith-communities including loss of members, diffusion of 'alien' ideology, generation-gap.

However typical religious plurality may be of the present situation in modern Western societies, its features are not confined to them. The Christian religion originated in a period of considerable religious plurality. In a global perspective it could also be argued that religious plurality today is more visible in many third world countries than in the West. The manifestations of religious plurality can all be understood as part of a wider concept of 'traditional plurality'.

This concept reflects an 'old' experience on the collective or group level, in the sense that societies or states have long consisted of several groups with, for example, different ethnic background, traditions, customs, languages and religions. It is implicit in many debates about multicultural society. For Western Europeans, traditional plurality seems to present itself as a feature of modern societies resulting from immigration after the Second World War, particularly from the end of 1960s. Partly because of this new immigration, Europe has become more aware of its old traditional plurality, whether this was regional, ethnic, religious or even (in a few cases) due to the presence of indigenous peoples. From a global perspective traditional plurality is hardly a new experience; it is rather the normal situation almost everywhere. The term 'traditional' is not meant to indicate some kind of developmental stage, but to point towards the long history of plurality. Traditional plurality is constantly undergoing changes and is itself a complex issue to analyse and interpret (Baumann, 1999).

One of the ways traditional plurality may differ according to time and place has to do with the relative separation of cultural groups and their traditions. One ideal-type can be described as separate groups living close to each other, but still each with their own language, religion and values. This kind of 'parallel plurality' may be exemplified by peaceful periods in the Balkans. On the other end of a continuum we find a 'creole plurality' with more 'open' groups, allowing individuals to cross

over, change religion, speak each other's languages etc. (Eriksen, 1994). In both cases this is traditional plurality. Seen in a historical perspective the nation-state has had a profound impact on socio-cultural plurality especially by turning cultural groups into either a 'minority' or a 'majority' within the limited area of the state borders.

The same historical development leading to construction of the modern nation-state has also created a socio-cultural situation that goes beyond traditional plurality. This concept is therefore not sufficient in order to grasp the specific modern situation. For a fuller understanding of the present context, we may introduce the concept of 'modern plurality'.

Modern Plurality

Historically, the development of modern society is connected with the rise of the bourgeoisie as the dominant class. Ideas about equality, freedom and justice, once effective in providing security for the individual and creating the framework for free enterprise, have penetrated society. But these ideals tend to undermine the specific socio-economic formation of capitalism creating problems of legitimisation, in particular when compensation is not made for the destruction of humans and environment caused by the same social system. Jürgen Habermas (1987) has expressed this contradiction at a high level of abstraction as the separation of and conflict between two main types of rationality: that of the life-world and that of the system.

Modern society has also changed the role and function of religion, often described as secularisation and privatisation. In debates about secularisation, sociologists of religion often emphasise differentiation as a particularly important factor (Tschannen, 1991). Differentiation means that modernity breaks down traditional bases of authority, such as religious ones, and accelerates the rate of change in many areas of life (Beckford, 2003). Consequently modernity displays different rationalities to its inhabitants, and the legitimisation of normative behaviour becomes strongly dependent on the context (Berger, Berger, & Kellner, 1974).

Following this, many sociologists of religion have described the position of religion in the West in terms of increasing individualisation and privatisation. Some theories about religion therefore focus on the situation of the individual, and in particular on questions of identity. It is not seen to be enough to investigate organised religion manifesting itself in groups with a distinct theology and rituals. Nevertheless, there has been a return to the study of the collective dimension of religion more recently, looking into the socio-cultural context of both groups and individuals (Beckford, 2003).

One of the insights of social science going back to Max Weber, is the significance of competing and often contradictory rationalities in understanding the present human condition. Sectors of society have become relatively independent of each other: they are held together mainly by their particular contribution to the overall

functioning of economy, but also through having specific tasks. The different sectors or systems within society tend to develop their own spheres of value and rules of behaviour, and it is difficult to see an overarching meaning apart from the continuation of the system in itself.

The competing rationalities are not only seen as contradictions between agents on the societal level, such as structures, power concentrations, groups and systems. They also manifest themselves as contradictions within the individual, as inner representations in the form of ideas and emotions in each person. The life-world is not experienced as 'traditional' and unified. The individual life-world is instead pluralised, and identity has become a major and time-consuming project. In spite of its distinctive modern character this should not be seen as a wholly new experience. According to Clifford Geertz, people in traditional societies also shift between different perspectives such as the religious, scientific, aesthetic and common-sense (Geertz, 1973). A difference between male and female perspectives also seems to transcend historical periods and a gender-based perspective could be seen as one of several dimensions of individual identity.

In spite of these modifications it seems to be the case that people more than ever before are exposed to a plurality of ideas, values, ideals, models and alternative choices for action. This means that innumerable learning processes are occurring, most of them outside the institutions traditionally designed for education. The motivation to take part in such learning processes comes from the fact that our daily life depends upon the use of different and often contradictory rationalities, and on managing them as part of a reflexive and plural identity. The number of different relationships we take part in has increased, which in turn has multiplied both the number of perspectives and the speed of perspective-shifts. To be able to live with these rapid shifts, our self-consciousness is intensified. We are impelled to question our identity and self-understanding over and over again, and questions of plurality and identity, including the religious dimension, have been the focus of several disciplines for some years (Baumann, 1999; Gergen, 1991; Giddens, 1991; Kymlicka & Norman, 2000; Meijer, 1995; Schrag, 1997).

The socio-cultural plurality we see in present societies is partly a matter of traditional plurality and partly of modern plurality. Both dimensions are dynamic in the sense that they may be more or less pronounced or 'strong'. Concepts like 'post-modernity' or 'late modernity' are expressions of the 'strong' type. The socio-cultural plurality in a given society at a certain point may therefore be indicated as a position relative to other societies or to different historical situations (Skeie, 2002b).

Religious Education, Plurality and Pluralism

Religious education has increasingly taken on the challenge of including the context of modern and traditional plurality as well as pluralism in its theoretical reflections and its teaching approaches.

Religious Education and Plurality

The relation between traditional (or religious) plurality and modern plurality can be described like this: the context of today's religious plurality is modern plurality. Modern plurality encourages a religious plurality and at the same time it relativises the question of truth by endorsing all these faith-options. Conflict and dialogue between religions have become part of an inner conflict and dialogue within people. Peter Berger has used the metaphor of the commodity-market to describe the social relations between religious communities. He has also coined the term 'the heretical imperative' to indicate the drive towards constant reinterpretation of tradition (Berger, 1967; 1980). While Berger has been most interested in organised religion, his co-author of *The Social Construction of Reality* (1991), Thomas Luckmann, has directed his research towards 'invisible religion' (1967). Through his work, we may gain a better understanding of how many people today outside religious communities continue to find ultimate meaning in their lives probably relating more and more spontaneously and freely towards traditional religious conventions and concepts. James Beckford (2003) has provided an updated and critical view both on a 'social constructionist approach' and on issues relating to social theory and religion; he strikes a balance between the processes of pluralisation, secularisation and re-sacralisation.

These insights are important for religious education because they provide an adequate interpretation of the situation of children and students in society. They also enable it to position itself as a scientific discipline. The situation of the child in a plural society is interpreted in several ways, based on different types of educational theory. This in turn has consequences for educational practice.

Some educationalists will tend to see plurality mainly as a given part of the child's surroundings. The main question will then be how education chooses to expose the child to these. A traditional way of seeking the answer would be to ask educational psychology about plurality and child development. It is possible to interpret Fowler's (1981) theory of faith development as a stage theory for children growing up under the conditions of plurality. In correspondence with what Gergen (1991) has called the modernist tradition of the self, the ultimate stage of development is a strong individual following mature and integrated values. In this line of theorising, plurality is conceptualised as the historically given surroundings, and humans as potentially strong individuals finding their way in the jungle of information. For religious education, this could mean endorsing and encouraging a variety of religious stances; but in this perspective the main aim in fact is to help individuals develop their own particular faith, while having an informed knowledge about other religions and world views.

Another, but similar, view understands the 'jungle' of plurality as hostile surroundings and wishes that the child would stay in the 'village' as long as possible before entering the wilderness. A corresponding theory of religious education would suggest that religious education should do its utmost to protect children from the forces of plurality until they are strong enough to deal with plurality themselves.

Perhaps this could best be done within the religious community or in a faith-based school with strong confessional values.

Others again consider plurality to be more apparent than real, and argue that under the surface of different religions and rationalities human beings are much the same. In religious education, this would mean studying the different religious traditions in order to discover similarities in issues of belief or values. A less cognitive approach would focus on religious (or 'spiritual') experience and life-issues, and allow the students to discover that they have the same basic feelings, hopes and anxieties across their faith communities. The individual student may then develop a personal life-view, one not necessarily linked to any of the explicit traditions, but based on the student's personal choice.

All these views conceive of plurality as an external force and, in spite of their different strengths, they are unable to deal fully with the issues of 'modern plurality'. The question for education is not merely how to expose the child to a plurality 'outside' school or external to the individual. Plurality is both external and internal; and in addition both children and their surroundings are undergoing change. Education should try to unravel some of these complex relationships. It may be easier to do this if the identity of the child and the social context are seen as different parts of the same cultural process, or 'flow of meaning' (Hannertz, 1992). The aim of religious education, as of education itself, should be to make people become increasingly conscious participants in this process, strengthening the interplay between the 'text' and 'context' of religious education. There are good reasons to argue that this is not reached by one approach alone and that there should be some sort of methodological pluralism in religious education. It has been argued, both on the basis of historical development as well as on an issue of principle, that religious education today needs to be pluralistic in its approaches (Jackson, 2004; Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003)

Religious Education and Pluralism

Religious education has to grapple with the question of pluralism in the context of actual plurality on at least three different levels; the epistemological, the ethical and the educational. First, on the level of epistemology, religious education has to deal with the problems arising from conflicting religions and world-views. Similar debates are known from theology, dealing with relations between religions, and from philosophy, dealing with rationality and realism (Hamnett, 1990; Hollis & Lukes, 1982). These debates sometimes influence the theory of religious education (Cooling, 1994). The existence of distinctly different approaches to religious education even within one country, partly being in competition or conflict with each other, and partly complementing each other, may be seen as a sign of different epistemological positions (Jackson, 2004).

Secondly, pluralism is related to ethics since religious education includes visions of a good society composed of people belonging to different religions and value-systems. It is generally agreed that all groups have a basic right to bring up children

within the influence of their parents' beliefs and values. Pluralism in this sense is, however, often in danger of rhetorical misuse. Some fundamentalist groups do not hesitate to use the declared pluralism of democratic institutions, although their long term goal is to dismantle both pluralism and the plurality it is based on. It can also be used as an official political slogan to divert attention from the problems of racism and power in ethnic relations. My view is based on the normative assumption that it is of great value to a society marked by religious and modern plurality that inter-cultural and inter-religious communication is taking place within a pluralistic framework. Current reflection on the relationships between citizenship and religious education also supports this (Jackson, 2003).

This brings us to the third and more explicit educational dimension of pluralism. The most strategic place for such inter-religious communication to take place is in a common school system, in a common classroom. In Western societies, educational institutions have been seen to lose significance in the socialisation of children and youth, which is now not so much into the family, as into peer groups and the oral and visual media. Nevertheless, the educational system is the only institution of society that includes most of the population during a formative period of their lives. The organisation and content of religious education varies from country to country in a way that would be difficult to imagine with other subjects (Schreiner, 2001). This suggests that religious education is one of the most politically sensitive educational issues. Religious education is strongly influenced by the politics of religion and religious educators can play a role by providing and supporting scientifically based knowledge. This does not mean opting for one universal approach to religious education in a plural society, but having a pluralistic openness towards different perspectives. It also means that religious education theory should be situated, self-reflective and multidisciplinary in its perspectives, and be sensitive to its own context.

Rather than making educational institutions a refuge from cultural and religious differences, these institutions should intensify their work with traditional and modern plurality. This could increase children and young people's competence in moving between the different arenas and perspectives of religious and modern plurality. They are subjects in their own culture, representing and presenting traditions. They can be innovative actors in their own learning if they are allowed. Religious education has the possibility of going deeper into both the religious and the modern plurality of which these children and young people are part, and developing their abilities both as observers and participants learning about and learning from plurality. In order to succeed in this, continuous and critical debate is needed both within and across national borders.

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PLURAL SELVES AND LIVING TRADITIONS: A HERMENEUTICAL VIEW ON IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY, TRADITION AND HISTORICITY

Wilna A. J. Meijer

Philosophy of Education, University of Groningen, Netherlands

Introduction

In the last decades of the twentieth century the issue of cultural and religious plurality was much considered and debated in West-European societies, both in a general context and with regard to the religious education of the schools of these societies in particular. In the 1970s a new pluralistic or 'multifaith' approach in both the practice of religious education and its theoretical underpinnings began in Britain (Cole, 1978; Cox, 1983; Hull, 1982; Jackson, 1982). By the turn of the millennium the religious education curricula of all West-European societies had in different ways come to reflect the increasing religious diversity of multi-cultural societies (cf. Heimbrock, 1998; Heimbrock, Scheilke & Schreiner, 2001: both with contributions from various West-European countries). In Britain, pluralistic religious education started in a phenomenological vein (Smart, 1968; Smart & Horder, 1975), and developed into a more hermeneutical approach (Jackson, 1997; 2004). In his paper at the fourteenth session of the International Seminar of Religious Education and Values in Philadelphia in 2004, John Hull stated that a hermeneutical approach to religious truth was shared by most contemporary pedagogies of religious education. On this view, truth is essentially unattainable for human beings, and 'the religious life is a quest for truth and not a confident possession of the entire truth' (Hull, 2004). According to a hermeneutical approach the art of asking questions is central to 'good religious education'. Religious education is essentially of a reflexive nature in its seeking to promote understanding of religion.

The new, pluralistic religious education fits the present world of rapid change and of inter-national, inter-ethnic, inter-cultural and inter-religious communication. Before multi-faith approaches were developed, there existed in matters of religious

education a self-evident and exclusive focus on the religion of the home background of the pupils. The religious upbringing at home was followed by a corresponding mono-religious religious instruction at school, which aimed at a deepening and consolidating of either the Jewish or Christian (perhaps rather either the Catholic or Protestant), and so on, faith of the student. As a rule, there was some introduction to 'world religions' in the later years of the secondary school education, but by then the students were supposed to be already well grounded and solidly rooted in the religion of their fathers and forefathers. The present pluralistic forms of religious education, however, have the knowledge and understanding of various religions as their central aim: knowledge and understanding of 'one's own' religion, but also (or maybe even above all) knowledge and understanding of the religions—and the non-religious world-views—of other persons, one's fellow-citizens in contemporary multi-cultural societies and in the world at large. This change of direction in religious education makes it necessary to re-think the concepts of identity and tradition, because in this present context it is problematical to envision religious identity and religious tradition as given, fixed and stable. A new understanding can be gained from the hermeneutical philosophy of Gadamer and Ricoeur. Ricoeur's 'hermeneutics of self' (Ricoeur, 1992) is part of his hermeneutics of historical consciousness. It connects identity to interpretation in the following way.

Instead of connecting identity to being and ever remaining the same, and so opposing it to change and development, the concept of identity is to be related to interpretation. For human beings, identity is not a matter of being, but rather a matter of reflectively answering the question 'Who are you?' in relation to the question 'Who am I?' Personal identity is one's own answer to that question. This quest for identity never comes to an end as long as one lives. One of the aims of education, then, could be formulated as the capacity to cope with that quest for identity. In this perspective, diversity and change no longer seem opposed to identity. They are rather the 'material' for a continuing process of redescribing the self, to use a term of the philosopher Rorty. In other words: the change and diversity that human beings are confronted with in their own lives demand an ongoing interpretation of their own lives and history. Dialogue or conversation could be presented as a metaphor for this historical and flexible type of personal identity, in contrast with a rigid identity dependent upon the exclusion of others which judges religious plurality negatively using metaphors such as mishmash (Hull, 1991). The flexible concept of identity is the only suitable one for the 'conversational' mode of religious education', as Jackson (1992, p. 100) described multi-faith religious education. Jackson developed a concept of 'interpretive religious education' in Britain (cf. Meijer, 2004). Rorty's philosophy is one of its cornerstones, and, as will be shown below, the ideas of Ricoeur and Rorty on identity are in harmony.

Whereas Ricoeur's 'hermeneutics of self' supplies us with a conceptual framework for an idea of identity that suits this 'conversational mode of religious education', Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy will be drawn upon to supply a suitable concept of tradition and historical consciousness (Gadamer, 1989). Every individual human being is from birth enveloped by a particular tradition. In a

culturally and religiously pluralistic context, and in the 'conversational' type of religious education fitting that context, this tradition is one of the voices in the conversation. The voice of one's own tradition then needs to be reflected upon, instead of being taken for granted or even allowed to go unnoticed. Only then can tradition become truly historical and develop historically (Meijer, 2004; 2006).

To summarise, the present chapter will reconsider the concepts of identity and tradition with the intention of incorporating plurality and historicity within them. Whereas the development of pluralistic religious education has generally concentrated on the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of religions and world-views other than one's own, the hermeneutical perspective supplies an understanding of what may happen to one's own tradition and identity as a consequence of such a broadening of horizons.

Identity as Interpretation

In his book *Soi-même comme un autre* of 1990 (Oneself as another, 1992), Ricoeur developed a hermeneutics of self as a part of his hermeneutics of text (Ricoeur, 1981; 1988). In the third volume of *Time and narrative* he had already introduced the concept of narrative identity and in the more recent book of 1990 he developed in detail the hermeneutics of self. This hermeneutics holds aloof from a Cartesian elevation of the ego as well as from Nietzsche's dethronement of it. A Cartesian view supposes the subject to be identical to itself 'through the diversity of its different states' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 246) because there is a constant substantial kernel, whereas according to a Nietzschean view such an essentially unchanging subject is no more than a substantialist illusion; in reality there exists no more than a multitude of emotions, desires and ideas. The problem of personal identity cannot be solved if we retain this contrast between an inherent identity on the one hand, and no identity at all on the other.

In order to develop a better concept of personal identity Ricoeur introduces a distinction between 'identité du même' (sameness; *mêmeté*) and 'identité du soi' (selfhood; *ipséité*). The problem of personal identity, then, is a problem of change, inherent in the notion of personal history. It is impossible to base one's identity of selfhood or personal identity on one's identity of sameness, for the latter simply is not permanent enough. The identity of sameness can diminish in the course of time or even disappear. Not only do people change in appearance (for example, they grow old, grey, fat), but they also change inwardly: they change their opinion, lose their youthfulness, come to develop new propensities and predilections and so on. The identity of sameness thus disappears, but it is not necessarily the case that the identity of selfhood has disappeared as well. The identity of self does not depend on a stable identity of sameness, either in appearance or in an inner, constant substantial kernel of the person underlying outward changes. It is not substance that calls identity into existence, but interpretation. This hermeneutical concept of narrative identity, then, is historical and dynamic. '[T]he narrative operation has developed an entirely original concept of dynamic identity which reconciles

the same categories that Locke took as contraries: identity and diversity' (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 143). Identity and diversity are no longer in sharp opposition.

By introducing a dialectic between sameness and selfhood Ricoeur succeeds in placing personal identity where it belongs, that is, in history—history in the double sense of what happened and of the story of what happened ('histoire means both 'story' and 'history'; Ricoeur, 1981, p. 30). Personal identity lies in the narrative mediation (Ricoeur, 1990) between the two types of identity which never totally coincide. One's biographical story restores unity by bringing coherence into the diversity, continuity into the changes of one's life, including the changes in oneself. Personal identity, therefore, is a history, an interpretation: 'self-understanding is an interpretation' (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 114). In other words, and with another quotation from Ricoeur: 'The self of self-knowledge is the fruit of an examined life' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 247).

We may conclude that we do not have to choose between a fixed, permanently identical, unchanging kernel of identity and a disintegrating multitude of ever-changing ideas, feelings, inclinations (that is, no identity at all). Interpreting our personal history makes coherence and unity possible. The self and all the changes it has undergone in the past are united in the temporal dimension, in personal history and its interpretation.

Ricoeur refers to Freud who used to work with his patients at 'a coherent acceptable story, in which the analysand can recognise his or her self-constancy' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 247). Rorty also refers to Freud when he develops the image of 'the self as a centreless web of beliefs and desires' (Rorty, 1991, p. 1). Rorty's understanding of the self is similar to Ricoeur's concept of personal identity. The web of beliefs and desires which make up the self has no centre, but neither is it disintegrating, for it is a 'web', that is, 'a coherent and plausible set of beliefs and desires' (Rorty, 1991, p. 147; *italics added*). The self is not an inner centre and it is not a substance; it is contingent (see the title of Rorty, 1989, and Rorty, 1991, p. 23 ff.). Self-knowledge, then, is not a matter of a search for a 'true centre' (Rorty, 1991, p. 148), but an interpretation of one's own development and history. It is, to quote Ryle, 'self-knowledge without privileged access' (Ryle, 1949, p. 160), for it is not a simple matter of introspection.

The interpretation of one's own life is at least as fallible and tentative as the interpretations of the history and lives of others. A definitive, complete, universally valid autobiography is impossible and therefore we must settle for incompleteness and openness. We must 'think of any human life as the always incomplete, yet sometimes heroic, reweaving of such a web' (Rorty, 1989, p. 43). Our self-image, our identity, is thoroughly historical. It changes. We change it. It is not one story only. It is not unambiguous, but plural.

Identity and the Aim of Education

If this is the character of personal identity, that is, an interpretation, historical, ever changing and plural, then it is difficult to regard achieving personal identity

as an aim of education. The educational aim should be formulated in terms of a capacity to interpret, rather than the establishment of identity as a particular outcome of that capacity. However, when aims of education are formulated in terms of identity, it is often not personal identity which is intended. An ethnic, cultural or religious identity—in short, a collective identity—comes into play as soon as the word ‘identity’ is introduced in this connection. Such aims enlist the educational process in the task of socialisation and enculturation. The intended outcome is that future adults will share in a certain collective identity. In that case, the dynamics and the interpretive character of personal identity are denied. Human development over time is denied, for the intention is to fix in advance what future adults shall be, believe, and value. This can hardly be a promising educational strategy in a world of rapid change and of cultural plurality on everyone’s doorstep. How will intercultural communication be possible if people are locked into different collective identities? Segregation and isolation then take the place of interaction.

If we want to embrace pluralism instead of apartheid we must promote widespread interaction instead of limiting it to interaction with only other members of one’s own social, cultural and religious groups. The heart of pluralism is interaction between people socialised in different ways, having different opinions and different interests (Crittenden, 1982; Meijer, 1999; Meijer, Benner, & Imelman, 1992; Procee, 1991). The possibility of this interaction-in-diversity comes with ‘reflexivity’, that is, the human possibility of reflecting on one’s own assumptions as well as on those of others. Humans can distance themselves from the positions they once took, they can change perspectives, take the role of the other; in short, they can learn and learn again. Actually, the assumption that humans can learn is one of the foundation concepts of educational theory and practice. The human being is an open being, a ‘homo interagens’ and not a ‘homo clausus’ (Procee, 1991, p. 104).

This human potential for reflection is more fundamental than identity, for identity-as-interpretation is the outcome of reflection. Personal identity, therefore, is necessarily tentative, to be reflected upon, reconsidered and revised again and again. Education should therefore not aim at identity-development or identity-formation, but at personhood (Imelman, 1974, 2000; Langford, 1968): at the capacity, in other words, for autonomous and responsible interpretation and agency, ‘the capacity to make informed choices’ (O’Hear, 1981). This concept of the person should not be regarded as some sort of self-sufficient Cartesian ego. On the contrary, persons realise the limits of their knowledge and understanding and their fallibility. They are therefore prepared to enter into communication and discussion seriously, with the expectation of learning from it; and, as a result, to come to judge and value and act in ways more apt, adequate and justifiable. Such persons are able and willing to reconsider and reflect.

The knowledge consistent with this concept of the person is sometimes divided into three domains: knowledge of the physical world, knowledge of the social world (which implies for example the concept of person) and knowledge of oneself. The distinction between the first two domains implies the well-known contrast between the sciences and the humanities. The last domain (knowledge of oneself) may,

perhaps, in principle be thought of as a sub domain of the humanities. Nevertheless, the three domains are reasonably distinct. In our context, this seems useful, for it gives us the opportunity to clarify the relation between Ricoeur's and Rorty's concept of personal identity on the one hand and the concept of person that we dwelt on a moment ago on the other hand. For the two certainly should not be amalgamated uncritically.

The relation between the two concepts gives us clarity about what distinguishes them. The person is the interpreter: personal identity is an interpretation. The person is the subject that interprets, the subject that holds the knowledge, that thinks, judges, justifies, values and acts – critically and reflectively. Personal identity is an interpretation – an interpretation in one of the three domains in which the person is interpreting. Personal identity is a self-image, one of the many interpretations that a person develops. Like any interpretation, this personal identity is not unchanging and universally valid. It is, like any interpretation, tentative and open to deliberation. Knowledge of oneself, one's past, one's present, one's possibilities and restrictions, is tentative in two respects. First, we accept the interpretation as tentatively valid—as we do (or ought to do, at least) with any interpretation. But, secondly, the interpreted object, that is, one's own life, goes on and can overthrow the interpretation almost immediately. This double tentativeness or double historicity is shared to some extent with the humanities. The interpretation is, as such, historical and therefore tentative and the object of the interpretation is historical, unstable and changing.

We might conclude that self-knowledge is essentially part of the domain of the humanities. It seems not unreasonable, though, to give it special attention. Perhaps we might think of it as a borderline case of the humanities—with a particular vulnerability to distortion. Self-knowledge is strikingly fallible, because the interest of the interpreting subject in this particular case, 'his or her own life', can easily be so strong that it distorts. It is in this case impossible to rule out the practical consequences of interpretations. In any interpretation of one's own life, past and present, anticipation and interpretation of the future, play a part. The interpretation may result in changing the situation of which it is an interpretation (self-defying prophecies); or it may, indeed, be the other way round: the interpretation may result in its own realisation (self-fulfilling prophecies). This brings us to the issue of the historicity and ambiguity of the humanities—with a special eye to the borderline case of personal identity.

Ambiguity and Historicity

The fallibility of our interpretations and knowledge is, in the case of self-knowledge, even greater than in other cases. Therefore, it might be wise, particularly regarding this knowledge, not to exclude alternative interpretations, but to test them out. A variety of perspectives can be taken on the history of one's life; a plurality of descriptions can be given of the same incidents and episodes.

I can tell the story of my life from different angles. I can write from the memory of my father who died when I was not even nine years old. Or I could focus on

the discovery of my interest in the philosophy of education during my first year at university, though I had intended to study curriculum theory. I might reconstruct my life in the light of the fact that I am female in gender, comparing myself with my mother and sisters and with my girl-friends or with famous feminists. The phase of my life in which awareness of human mortality became more than just a piece of descriptive knowledge and gained existential relevance, might also be a point of departure. And so on, and so on. The stories may vary considerably, although they are all about one object, my life. The same events may figure in various stories and get a different meaning and relevance from the varying contexts. Nevertheless each and every story can be true and convincing. We should not allow ourselves to be confined to the supposedly one true version of the story of our life—to one fixed identity only.

Rorty seems to underline Kundera's words, which he rephrases in the following way: 'What he finds most heroic is not the ability sternly to reject all descriptions save one, but rather the ability to move back and forth between them' (Rorty, 1991, p. 74). The tentativeness and fallibility of our interpretations demand tolerance of ambiguity from us, demand the courage to live with uncertainty and instability, with openness and plurality. Reflective, critical persons are capable of living with an open set of identities, with a plural self. They constantly reweave the web of their identity. 'Maturity will, according to this view, consist (...) in an ability to seek out new redescriptions of one's own past—an ability to take a nominalistic, ironic view of oneself' (Rorty, 1991, p. 152).

Irony is a keyword in Kundera's essay on the art of the novel (Kundera, 1986). Irony results from the awareness that it is impossible to settle the question of which interpretation is the right one. It deprives us of our certainties by relativising each and every interpretation. Novels confront us with the ambiguity of the human condition, that is, the fundamental insight that human beings are never what they think they are. Therefore their identity is elusive, even illusive. This is what Kundera means by the phrase of his famous book title: *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (cf. Kundera, 1986, especially p. 27). Thus Kundera's essay on the art of the novel presents the same insight as the theories of Ricoeur and Rorty on identity. And it is similar to the existentialist theory of personality developed by the Dutch author Kouwer (1963; cf. Meijer, 1991). Kouwer's question is whether there is a true kernel of our personality hiding behind all our appearances. His answer is ruthless: our hidden truth is nothing. The identity of human beings is indeterminable. Neither they themselves nor others can fix it for once and for all. If one insists on finding a fundamental principle in human existence, then that could only be ambiguity. Doubt and uncertainty then prevail. In other words, there is only one certainty, namely the wisdom of uncertainty, to use Kundera's expression. The irony of the novel is in tune with that wisdom, for the novel is the imaginative room in which no one owns the truth and everyone has the right to be understood.

Rorty accepts Kundera's idea of irony. Because of the contingency and the plurality of self-descriptions, of identities, irony is certainly not out of place here. Irony relativises – it accepts the ambiguity and elusiveness of personal identity.

Irony seems to be the appropriate epistemic attitude, at least in the domains of the humanities and self-knowledge. Irony, or in other words, the wisdom of uncertainty.

However, the fact that there is no unambiguous truth to be achieved need not lead us to the conclusion that arbitrariness is all that remains. On the one hand, Rorty sometimes seems to suggest that the search for the one and only true self should be replaced by an ironic, playful and unhelpful variety of self-descriptions. On the other hand, his pragmatism comes to the fore when he says that we can establish the use and value of one description as compared to others, even though the quest for absolute truth has to be rejected. Self-knowledge is fallible like all knowledge, or even more so; but perhaps in this case awareness of fallibility is especially liberating. To reinforce this proposition we can at this point refer to Ricoeur's hermeneutics of historical consciousness (Ricoeur, 1988). This hermeneutics of historical consciousness can be construed as an elucidation of the nature of the humanities. It is certainly connected directly with Ricoeur's hermeneutics of self as discussed above. Self-knowledge, personal identity, by definition is a matter of historical consciousness: 'The question of identity [is] tied to that of temporality' (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 17).

The categories of 'experience' (of the past) and 'expectation' (of the future) and the dialectic between them are constitutive of the historical consciousness. There should be an adequate balance between the two. If that balance is disturbed, historical interpretations will suffer. The expectations should not be utopian, but they should be built on experience gained in the reality of the present and the past. In other words: expectations for the future should be realistic. This gives us an opportunity of judging the relative validity of various interpretations. The measure of expectation should be human. One should be able to act on it, to take practical steps towards its realisation; one should be able to take practical responsibility for it. Escapist and unrealistic dreams of the future are a-historical.

With respect to the experience of the past, it is also true that our interpretations should be liveable and practicable. We should not fix the past or record it, set it down, as over and finished. Time and again we can reopen the past by reinterpreting it. We may revise and revive the past and, in doing so, renew possibilities that seemed to have died out. Alternative interpretations of the past open up alternative perspectives on the future. One's own history too, one's identity, is open to more than one interpretation. Plurality and identity are not opposed: they go together in the plural self.

Tradition and Historical Consciousness

Thus far the activity of the interpreting subject in the continuing redescription of its personal identity has been the central theme of this chapter. The role of tradition has not been neglected, in so far as it was implied that it was among the 'materials' that individuals draw upon in weaving the webs of coherent stories of their life, and was thus one of the 'voices in an ongoing conversation'. One of the important insights of hermeneutics, however, concerns the characteristic going together of

activity and passivity of human beings in their relation to tradition. This ambiguous unity of passivity ('being moved') on the one hand, and of activity on the other, is characteristic for the act of reading (Meijer, 2002), but it applies to all other acts of interpretation and understanding as well. We now turn to Gadamer's hermeneutics for some further clarification. That will provide insights into ways traditions are developing and evolving historically—in and through the historical interpretations and actions of human beings over time—and how the vitality of traditions depends on such constant reinterpretation. It will also provide an indication of the difficulty human beings find in coming to realise what 'one's own' tradition is, and what its meaning and significance, its historical but possibly enduring value are, and so on. Such an arriving at the level of reflection and understanding vis-a-vis one's own tradition is of great educational value, in contrast to the naïve, uncritical embracing of tradition that is characteristic of preconceptions or pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*), or indeed prejudice.

Human life is historical and finite. This essential historicity touches all of human existence—human knowledge and understanding share in that historicity and are always tentative and liable to change. Understanding and interpretation are essentially part of human existence (conceived of as *Dasein*: 'being there', being-in-the-world, a situated-ness that demands interpretation). The temporal structure of the human existence is 'geworfener Entwurf' (Gadamer, 1960, p. 268), in which the active and the passive side of the relation of the human being with tradition are united. On the one hand, *Dasein* or human existence is 'geworfen', that is, 'thrown' or 'thrown into': being part of something pre-existing right from the start of one's life. This is the passive aspect of belonging to traditions ('Zugehörigkeit zu Traditionen'). But on the other hand, human existence is a project or 'Entwurf', which refers to the active aspect of projecting future possibilities for one's life from tradition, in other words, originating from tradition. The tradition as handed down and received affects any ideal and desire as to what one could do and become. Tradition is simultaneously enabling and restricting. 'Everything that makes possible and limits *Dasein*'s projection ineluctably precedes it' (Gadamer, 1989, p. 264). This fundamental tenet of the historicity of human existence is made into a hermeneutical principle when Gadamer derives the hermeneutical circle, the circle of understanding, from it.

This amounts to his rehabilitation of prejudice, pre-conceptions or pre-understanding. On the one hand, Gadamer turns against the prejudice of the Enlightenment against prejudice. He judges the Enlightenment rejection of prejudice a disempowerment of tradition ('*Entmachtung der Überlieferung*', Gadamer, 1960, p. 275). As human beings necessarily live in and from tradition, its importance can hardly be overrated, according to Gadamer. The preconceptions of human beings are not their individually formed ideas or judgments; they rather constitute the historical reality of the human existence—the history or tradition of which the individual human beings are a part, in other words: their specific historical way of living and thinking. On the other hand, Gadamer also distances himself from Romanticism, that in its reaction to Enlightenment celebrates tradition but in doing

so retains the Enlightenment opposition of reason and tradition. Both adhere to the same dichotomy and from there have to misunderstand the historicity of human existence and understanding. Tradition is not something that we could romantically affirm and embrace (or, indeed, not affirm and embrace, but criticise and reject). Rather, human beings are embraced by tradition. They live in and from and through tradition. Tradition, preconceptions, are rehabilitated by Gadamer because of their constitutive role in human understanding. In the processes of interpretation and understanding, tradition is, however, constantly modified. Reason and tradition are intertwined instead of opposed.

In the process of interpretation, preconceptions that help understanding are sieved and sifted from preconceptions that hinder it. It is impossible to sort out productive from unproductive preconceptions before starting the process of interpretation itself. The preconceptions from tradition are at our back, in our eyes rather than in front of our eyes. Since we are in a particular tradition and that tradition is in us, we have an eye for some things and not for others, for some aspects of a particular matter more than for others. It is only in trying to understand something specific (a text, a happening, a historical incident, for example) that we may discover parts of our preconceptions as enhancing or as hindering our understanding of that something. Our preconceptions are not at our free command; our only chance to identify, and then maybe change or correct them, is indirectly, in catching their share in understanding or misunderstanding something.

In all understanding tradition plays its role: enabling and restricting at the same time. 'Understanding is, essentially, a historically effected [wirkungsgeschichtlicher] event' (Gadamer, 1989, p. 300): history 'works' ('wirkt'), history is effective, we are affected. To this concept of *Wirkungsgeschichte* (effective history) Gadamer adds the concept of *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein* (the consciousness of effective history, or put simply: historical consciousness). As long as human beings are not aware of the role of tradition, their understanding is naïve. Everything is entirely and naïvely understood from what is familiar, so familiar and close that it itself goes unnoticed. If, however, there exists an awareness of tradition playing its constitutive role in understanding, that is, if there is historical consciousness, then it is possible to proceed more reflexively and critically in interpretation and understanding. Not that from then on one's preconceptions are at one's disposal and that one is completely translucent to oneself. Historical consciousness is rather an awareness in general that understanding necessarily feeds on preconceptions. If that awareness is kept awake, it has the effect of openness: the individual will raise questions for search and research rather than be content with purely traditional, preconceived, prefabricated answers. An open mind is a questioning mind.

[T]o question means to lay open, to place in the open. As against the fixity of opinions, questioning makes the object and all its possibilities fluid. A person skilled in the 'art' of questioning is a person who can prevent questions from being suppressed by the dominant opinion (Gadamer, 1989, p. 367).

What is important here is that it is due to historical consciousness that people can intend to be open to what threatens to escape their attention or what threatens to get distorted in their eyes. They can, that is, be open to the different, to the other, instead of clinging naïvely to the familiar. And it is only because of such historical consciousness that the tradition that one shares can be carried onwards in a reflective, critical and innovative way.

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CRITICAL REALISM AS A TOOL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN LIBERAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Andrew Wright

Senior Lecturer, Religious and Theological Education, London

Introduction

In traditional forms of ‘confessional’ religious education, concerned primarily to nurture children within a specific faith, religious culture could be interpreted from the perspective of the relatively monolithic culture of the host faith community. Thus, for example, traditional confessional religious education in England and Wales sought to nurture children in the Christian faith in a manner inclusive of the perspectives of a range of different Protestant churches. Despite significant denominational differences, locally Agreed Syllabuses were able to achieve a level of unanimity about the nature of Christianity and the way it should be taught in the classroom. With the advent of forms of liberal religious education operating in a multi-faith context and seeking to cultivate religious understanding in an open non-confessional manner, this consensus quickly fragmented. Liberal religious educators faced the daunting task of interpreting religion in a pluralistic context in which there was no shared understanding of the nature of religion. The plurality of contrasting and contradictory interpretations of religion—religious and secular, universal and tradition-specific—made the search for a mutually acceptable framework for religious education increasingly problematic. In this context the search for secure foundations for the theory and practice of religious education needs to give way to the looser notion of a set of provisional heuristic guidelines. This chapter sets out to identify the criteria that such guidelines will need to meet if they are to do justice to the integrity of the vast range of different interpretations of religion currently competing with one another. It proposes that the philosophy of critical realism offers religious educators the possibility of reaching agreement on just such a set of guidelines.

Criteria for an Interpretative Framework

In this opening section I suggest four criteria against which any interpretative framework for liberal religious education in a pluralistic society ought to be judged: a) freedom of belief; b) tolerance of the beliefs of others; c) reasoned debate; d) the pursuit of truth and truthfulness.

- a) The first criterion is that any framework should allow for the greatest possible *freedom of belief*. Given the diversity of assumptions, beliefs and commitments present within a plural society, it is appropriate that liberal religious education actively affirms the core value of maximum inclusivity. This principle should apply to all participants at all levels—pupils, parents, teachers, faith communities, government etc.—and hence requires the acceptance of a diversity of different worldviews, both religious and secular. This in turn will necessitate reference to: a) a variety of different conceptions of the nature, scope, source and accessibility of knowledge; b) a range of complementary academic disciplines, both those associated with the human sciences and those – primarily theological and philosophical in outlook – whose task it is to address ultimate meta-questions; c) a cluster of different linguistic traditions and means of expression. Of course, it will never be possible to be completely inclusive: there will always be those who, whether for religious or secular reasons, elect to opt out of the process. Despite this, the framework ought to strive to create the conditions in which as many as possible feel able to participate without the need to compromise their fundamental beliefs and practices. Similarly, there may be certain attitudes, such as a deeply rooted irrationality or aggressive a-morality, which educators consider too extreme to have a role to play in the educational process. Nevertheless, since such extremes are normally best challenged through direct critical engagement in the classroom, exclusions ought to be rare exceptions to the general rule of inclusivity.
- b) The second criterion is that any framework should allow for the greatest possible *tolerance of the beliefs of others*. At its most basic, this is simply an extension of the criterion of freedom of belief: tolerance is the duty that individuals and groups have to others, given the acknowledgment of their own freedom of belief. However, it is important not to devalue the nature of tolerance. In particular, it is not to be equated with the bracketing out of conflicting beliefs in an attempt to cultivate the pretence of mutual compatibility. At root, this latter strategy denies plurality by seeking to impose a naïve economy of sameness. At the heart of genuine tolerance is the notion of forbearance: of recognising and living alongside those whose beliefs are fundamentally incompatible with one's own. Such forbearance can be a virtue if offered in a spirit of honesty and humility, though it can cease to be so if given grudgingly and disrespectfully. As Levinas (1969; 1998) consistently argues, when faced with the gaze of the 'Other' we have a shared moral duty to acknowledge the differences that stand between us, rather than seek to dissolve them in an ultimately fraudulent economy of mutual identity.

Tolerance thus requires an open and honest recognition of difference, together with a willingness to engage in a spirit of respectful humility with the truth claims and life-styles of those with whom we fundamentally disagree. This requires us to be both open and committed to our own beliefs and willing to engage with the beliefs of others: finding points of accommodation whenever possible, but not hesitating to acknowledge tensions and even irreconcilable differences when they arise. Any other strategy is likely to cheapen pluralism by seeking prematurely to overcome it; a refusal to accept the 'dignity of difference' is potentially a deeply intolerant strategy (Sacks, 2003).

- c) The third criterion is that any framework should seek to maximise *reasoned debate* between adherents of differing beliefs systems and world-views. Though it might be tempting to limit our framework to the twin principles of freedom and tolerance, to do so would be to implement a strategy that opens the door to a range of undesirable consequences. In the first place, simply to acknowledge other persons' beliefs without having the courtesy to explore them in any depth can be deeply patronising; this suggests, further, that an individual's failure to defend their own deeply held commitments might imply a lack of personal integrity on their part. Second, if religious education is reduced to the singular task of nurturing the virtues of freedom and tolerance, then its own integrity as a subject discipline is likely to be seriously compromised: functioning as little more than a branch of moral education, it will struggle to fulfil its primary responsibility to cultivate knowledge and understanding of religion as a *sui generis* dimension of culture. Third, an exclusive focus on the virtues of freedom and tolerance is likely—albeit often by default—to lead directly to the interpretation of a deeply divided pluralistic culture in terms of a specific set of Liberal beliefs and assumptions. I am assuming, here, a distinction—which I have unpacked in greater detail elsewhere—between liberalism as an open heuristic tool for exploring cultural diversity, and Liberalism as a closed world-view that seeks, like many others, to attract converts into its fold (Wright 2001a, 2004). If the cultivation of freedom and tolerance becomes an end in itself, rather than a means to the greater end of engaging respectfully with the beliefs of others, then the result is likely to be a return to confessional religious education—specifically the non-negotiable confession of the truths of Liberalism.

Confessionalism as an all-embracing approach to religious education in the context of a genuinely pluralistic society has, quite rightly, been seen as an inappropriate exercise of power. The imposition of the truths of (say) Islam or Christianity in such a context is no more acceptable than the imposition of a Liberal world-view that—by virtue of its abdication of any responsibility to examine different religious and secular truth claims—advocates the implicit relativism of fundamental beliefs by treating them as little more than private, optional, and hence ultimately unimportant, life-style choices. As we shall see, the criterion of reasoned debate need not imply a commitment to a narrowly conceived rationalism or assume that reason constitutes the

only response to the challenges posed by cultural pluralism. Nevertheless, a reasoned exploration of the questions thrown up by religious pluralism is, on balance, a better option than either a) the authoritarian imposition of one particular set of answers, or b) the premature abdication of the pedagogical responsibility to engage with the various issues.

- d) The fourth criterion is that any framework should seek to cultivate the *pursuit of truth and truthful living*. Once the virtues of freedom and tolerance are firmly in place, and the value of reasoned debate acknowledged, the inevitable question arises: ‘Why bother?’ Any answer, I suggest, needs to be offered in the light of religious education’s primary subject matter: religion itself. It is perhaps not overly simplistic to suggest that, broadly speaking, religion fulfils two basic roles in society: to enable religious adherents to engage with ultimate reality and to enable them to live flourishing lives in harmony with others in the light of that reality. The first raises questions of ultimate truth, the second of truthful living. Once again, we need to be wary of an uncritical acceptance of the prevailing Liberal world-view on such matters. Generally speaking, Liberalism tends to be agnostic about questions of ultimate truth, whilst at the same time identifying a close link between truthful living and the cultivation of the virtue of freedom and tolerance (Williams, 2002). Crucially, the vast majority of religious traditions simply do not see things this way: most offer truth claims that invoke some form of transcendent reality and interpret human flourishing in terms of the nature and quality of our response to this ultimate reality. Even the most mystical of Sufi traditions within Islam recognises that the ultimate truth about reality is to be found in the mystery of Allah rather than in any Liberal-inspired epistemological agnosticism. Truthful living for Muslims requires submission to the will of Allah rather than the cultivation of the Liberal virtues of autonomy and tolerance. It is, of course, true that Allah requires his adherents to take responsibility for their lives and to show the same mercy and beneficence to others that he has shown them. However, the virtues of freedom and tolerance are neither the foundation nor the primary goals of Islam. Rather, the true foundation is Allah and the primary goal submission to his will: freedom and tolerance are goods that flow from the Muslim world-view, rather than abstract principles that form and ground it. In a plural society we are faced with a diversity of incompatible accounts—both religious and secular—of both the ultimate nature of reality and the nature, grounds and possibilities of human flourishing. If liberal religious education seeks to take pluralism seriously, then it has both a moral and intellectual obligation to pursue rigorously questions of truth and truthfulness.

The Poverty of Current Interpretative Frameworks

Before considering the potential contribution of critical realism to liberal religious education, we must first rule out a range of alternative interpretative frameworks. Our attention will focus on the English and Welsh context, not least because the

original aspirations of liberal religious education that emerged in the early 1970s were broadly similar to those envisaged in the criteria set out in the previous section. Its commitment to the principles of inclusivity and tolerance may be taken as read: it is immediately apparent in the relevant literature and I am unaware of any attempt to dispute it (Jackson, 2004). However, its commitment to the rational pursuit of religious truth is perhaps less familiar, and as such requires further attention. Ninian Smart (1968) was both a key instigator and a representative figure in the emergence of liberal religious education in Britain. As such, he had no hesitation in arguing that the subject ‘must transcend the informative...in the direction of initiation into understanding the meaning of, and into questions about the truth and worth of, religion’ (p. 105). This in turn required a multidisciplinary approach to the subject, one rich enough to encapsulate ‘a chain of logic from the empirical study of religion to the para-historical’ (p. 106). Though the cluster of disciplines operating under the umbrella subject area of religious studies naturally ‘emphasise the descriptive historical side of religion’, they also have a duty to ‘enter into dialogue with the para-historical claims of religious and anti-religious outlooks’ (p. 106). At the same time, the discipline of theology must not be reduced to a private affair conducted within the confines of faith communities, since there is an ‘inner logic that drives theology outwards’ (p. 90). As we shall see, this bold vision—of freedom and tolerance preparing the ground for a rational exploration of religious truth—has yet to be fully realised. In the rest of this section we will consider three different attempts to establish an overarching interpretative framework for liberal religious education: a) the social sciences; b) philosophy of religion and theology; c) the more general and broad-ranging Western ‘outlooks’ of Liberalism and post-modernity.

- a) Appeal to the various *disciplines of the social sciences* has proved to be by far the most common response to the search for an over-arching interpretative framework for the subject. Of these, the appeal to phenomenological description has been pre-eminent, to the extent that in the late 1970s liberal religious education for many practitioners simply *was* phenomenological religious education. Though the phenomenological approach certainly set out to be both inclusive and tolerant, the measure of its success has been the subject of considerable dispute (Barnes, 2001). Its tendency to view religion as a generic category and represent diverse religious traditions within a common structural framework certainly allowed for the inclusion of a significant *quantity* of different religious perspectives; however, in viewing distinctive traditions as similarly structured sub-sets of the common category ‘religion’, phenomenology struggled to do justice to the substantial qualitative differences between traditions. This meant that a rich notion of tolerance-as-forbearance was often lost, a situation not helped by the expectation that pupils should bracket out their prior beliefs when engaging with the phenomenon of religion (Sharpe, 1975). Further, though the two crucial tools of phenomenological analysis—neutral description and empathetic understanding—certainly encouraged the pursuit of factual knowledge and experiential sensibility, they

contributed little to the kind of conceptual and critical understanding required of any evaluation of the truth claims of the various traditions. Insofar as the question of religious truth remained a live option, the generic structuralism underlying the phenomenological method carried with it the strong implication that individual religious traditions constituted little more than relativistic culturally bound expressions of a common universal religious experience. There is, unfortunately, no space here to explore various alternatives to phenomenology and in particular the appeals to the disciplines of psychology and ethnography (Hay, 1985; Jackson, 1997). Despite their unique and invaluable contribution, when used in isolation from other disciplines they tend to be reductive and as such fail to do full justice to religious pluralism. At the heart of the problem is the fact that the various social sciences focus on religion primarily as a product of human culture, and seek to interpret religions against the background of the secular humanistic traditions of naturalism and romanticism (Wright, 1998). Though I would not go as far as those who claim that the social sciences are inherently atheistic, they certainly carry with them an undercurrent of agnosticism (Milbank, 1993). At heart, they offer a discourse about religion as a socio-cultural reality, rather than a conversation with the accounts of transcendent reality offered by adherents of specific religious traditions.

- b) Given the problems inherent in an exclusive reliance on the social sciences, many religious educators have sought to re-engage with the *disciplines of theology and philosophy of religion*. The work of Peter Vardy, for example, has led to something of a revolution in the practice of religious education in the upper end of secondary schools: the explicit teaching of the philosophy of religion has certainly offered pupils tools for the rational exploration of religious truth claims in a manner that the social sciences have been unable to provide (Vardy, 1999). Despite this, the philosophy of religion tends to explore general religious questions at the expense of any substantial engagement with the beliefs of specific religious traditions: thus the existence of 'God' as an abstract idea tends to be discussed, rather than—for example—the specific Trinitarian God of Christianity. Though some educationalists have advocated the exploration of tradition-specific theological truth claims in the classroom, this has not yet had any lasting effect across the subject as a whole (Hookway, 2002; 2004). In contrast, the universal theological model underlying the work of David Hay has been far more influential: explicitly realistic in his theological orientation, he argues that religious education should counter the prevailing secular suspicion of religion by stimulating the universal capacity for religious experience of the transcendent or divine (Hay, 1985). The key problem is that such a universal theology fails to take pluralism seriously. In assuming that all religious traditions are relatively true expressions of a universally accessible religious experience, Hay plays down the importance of the unique truth claims of specific traditions: Islam, for example, claims that knowledge of Allah comes through the revelation offered

to humanity in the Qur'an, rather than any universal experience of—or feeling for—transcendence (Wright, 1998). Though there is much promise in this turn to philosophy and theology, the various approaches have tended to be both fragmentary and generalised. If both the philosophy of religion and the various theological discourses offered by specific religious traditions are to play a role in liberal religious education, and if we are not to lose touch with the valuable insights provided by the social sciences, then it appears likely that our search for a viable interpretative framework must turn not to the discourse of a particular discipline, but rather to a broader discourse capable of organising a range of different disciplines in a coherent and pedagogically valuable manner.

- c) These considerations lead us directly to a consideration of the third of our candidates for an appropriate interpretative framework: that of more *broad-ranging Western 'outlooks'*. The first of these, and by far the most influential, is that of Liberalism itself. It is particularly significant in the present context, since the four criteria outlined in the previous section—freedom, tolerance, reason and the pursuit of truth—constitute the quintessential heart of the open heuristic liberal tradition. This should not come as any surprise: given that all religious education is necessarily contextualised, one would expect liberal religious education in Western democracies to be contextualised within the liberal tradition itself. Nevertheless it is vital to exercise a degree of caution at this stage in proceedings. Liberalism originated as a broad moral outlook in response to a cultural context marked by tensions between distinctive and potentially irreconcilable belief systems. By invoking the liberal principles of freedom and tolerance as a kind of 'interim ethic', the original liberal vision sought to establish a context in which conflicting parties could seek to resolve their differences on the basis of a rational pursuit of truth, rather than through any resort to violence (Wright 2001a; 2004). However, as the liberal tradition developed, so it gradually became reified into a closed Liberal world-view, in which the values of freedom and tolerance came to be seen as ends in themselves. Once personal freedom was established as the ultimate human good, the pursuit of truth on the basis of reasoned argument was increasingly seen as a fundamental threat to such freedom: knowledge was equated with power, and reason identified as a tool of repression (Gunton, 1995). That is to say, the ultimate destination of Liberalism, understood as a specific world-view, is post-modernity (Wright, 2004).

In the interests of both tolerance and truth, religious education needs to be open to the possibility that there may be some truth in the post-modern belief that we can and should exercise our freedom imaginatively to construct the world(s) we wish to inhabit (Erricker, 2001). This, however, is not the same as suggesting that post-modernity is capable of providing religious education with an interpretative framework capable of doing justice to pluralism. On the contrary, insofar as the specific understanding of the nature of knowledge, power and freedom advanced

by post-modernity constitutes a specific response to the challenge of pluralism, it is not well placed to facilitate a conversation between conflicting traditions, especially those which fundamentally oppose the specific position adopted by post-modernity (Wright, 2001b). Not to allow post-modern perspectives on religion a voice within liberal religious education would be distinctively illiberal; at the same time, to embrace post-modernity as an interpretative framework would simply signal a return to confessionalism: the one difference being that, where formally children were taught to worship the Christian God, now they would be encouraged to worship at the altar of the greatest of post-modern gods—absolute and unrestricted freedom.

The Contours of Critical Realism

Critical realism claims that there is a real world ‘out there’ which we can come to know. In doing so, it rejects the naïveté of assuming that knowledge is self-apparent and readily accessible: the complex nature of reality, coupled with the limitations of human knowledge, means that the unearthing of knowledge is necessarily a critical process. Nevertheless, it is possible to know reality as-it-is-in-itself—however partially and provisionally—and as such there is no need to resign ourselves to knowledge of merely the appearance of reality, or take the more radical anti-realistic step of proclaiming all knowledge to be an illusion. The label ‘critical realism’ tends to be used in two different, though complementary, ways in contemporary philosophy: first, to identify a general stream of thought that seeks to avoid the extremes of modern rationalism and post-modern irrationalism; second, to identify a specific school of philosophy associated with the work of Roy Bhaskar (Bhaskar, 1993; 1994; 1997; 1998; Collier, 1994; 2003; Wright, 2004). In the rest of this section we will have recourse to both the general and specific uses of the term.

The assumption that there is a real world ‘out there’, that exists regardless of whether we are aware of it or not, constitutes the core assumption of critical realism. As such it is committed to the standard common-sense understanding of truth that most of us use as a matter of course in our ordinary everyday lives: a true statement is one which correctly identifies the way things ‘actually are’ in the ‘real world’. Thus, it is ‘true’ that aspirin can help to relieve pain, that at the time of writing George Bush is the President of the United States of America, and that the vast majority of Muslims believe in the existence of God. In philosophical terms we are concerned with ‘alethic realism’, according to which ‘a statement (proposition, belief...) is true if and only if what the statement says to be the case actually is the case’ (Alston, 1996, p. 5). Thus, gold is malleable if, and only if, gold is malleable; God created the world *ex nihilo* if, and only if, God created the world *ex nihilo*.

Critical realism goes on to make a number of broad assumptions about reality. First, that reality is in some sense meaningful. Despite significant levels of contingency, there appear to be, at a deep level, certain structures, patterns and processes that order reality. If this were not so, then it would be impossible to carry out most ordinary everyday activities, or engage in informed conversations in fields such as science and morality. Second, reality embraces the realms of the material

and the mental: it is equally true that water is made up of H_2O and that the idea of democracy has currency in the modern world. Thus critical realism questions Descartes' dualistic distinction between the material and mental as two separate substances, a distinction that resulted in false attempts to demonstrate the priority of either the material (empiricism) or the mental (idealism). Third, many critical realists leave open the possibility of the existence of some transcendent reality—possibly divine—'above' or 'beyond' the immanent world of objects and ideas bound by time and space (Archer, Collier & Porpora, 2004). Fourth, it seems likely that some dimensions of reality are more fundamental, or ultimate, than others. Thus, if atheistic naturalism is right, and the world is simply the product of cause and effect in the material world, then the reality of the mental ideas generated by human beings are ultimately dependent on physical reality. Similarly, if God created the universe out of nothing, then the reality of both the material and mental realms is dependent on the ultimate reality of God. It is important to recognise that these assumptions are minimal: the belief that reality is meaningful, that it consists of the realms of the material, mental and possibly transcendent, and that some aspects may be more fundamental than others, leaves open the possibility of a whole range of different readings of the world, both religious and secular.

The fact that critical realism claims access to knowledge of the world, yet remains open to a range of different interpretations of reality, inevitably raises epistemological questions. Broadly speaking, knowledge of the world is arrived at by careful attention to, and analysis of, the available evidence. We have no access to clear and certain knowledge built on self-evident foundations; instead we gain knowledge by constructing models, theories and stories on the basis of experience, which we then test against experience in an ongoing process of experience-revision. Such experience is conceived holistically: it is not a matter of constructing complex ideas out of atomistic units of sense experience, but of engaging with traditions of meaning that have gradually developed in communities, often over an extended period of time. The key analogy is that of the development of an intricate web of rational beliefs about reality, rather than the construction of a chain of evidential truths that are only as strong as their weakest link (Quine & Ullian, 1978). This process parallels that of scientific investigation, though the interest of the critical realist extends far beyond an exclusive concern for the natural world, embracing fundamental questions of meaning, value, morality, aesthetics, spirituality and transcendence. Such knowledge is the subject of informed judgement rather than direct proof. As such, it is always contingent, but not for that reason arbitrary and relativistic: there are normally good reasons for preferring one set of judgements over another.

Since reality is conceived of as both structured and complex, it is possible to offer different-yet-complementary accounts of the same reality. Thus a person may be described both by both the natural sciences (physics, chemistry, biology etc.) and the human sciences (history, psychology, sociology etc.). Our knowledge can be extended further by attending to artistic disciplines: a poem or painting may illuminate the nature of a person in a manner the natural and social sciences are

unable to achieve. In addition the meta-disciplines of philosophy and theology can help us to understand people in terms of their relationship with the ultimate structures of reality. Critical realism resists the reductionism inherent on both the modernist tendency to reduce knowledge to brute material facts, and the post-modern inclination to limit 'knowledge' to the mere expression of subjective taste. By refusing to rule out in advance any single discipline's contribution to our knowledge of the world, critical realism argues that it is possible to build up a rich multi-dimensional understanding of reality.

As individuals and communities involved in the pursuit of knowledge of reality, we are intimately engaged in the world we seek to understand. As such we are ourselves part of reality, though only ever a relatively insignificant part: if we were to cease to exist, the change this would bring about in the actual order-of-things would be slight. The implications of this are two-fold: first, it remains legitimate to talk realistically of a given world 'out-there' whose structures endure whether we know about them or not; second, it is equally legitimate to talk about our participation in reality. It follows that our knowledge of the world takes the form of relational knowledge of a reality that we can know in part, but not fully. This is important, since if our knowledge of the world includes knowledge of how we relate to the world it follows that the pursuit of knowledge is both the search for truth about the world and the struggle to find ways of living truthful lives in harmony with the nature of reality in general, and with ultimate reality in particular.

Critical Realism as an Interpretative Framework for Religious Education

My suggestion here is that critical realism offers religious education the basis for a broad interpretative framework that meets the four criteria outlined above. This is not to claim that it constitutes the only possible framework, though I am suggesting that at the present moment in the development of liberal religious education it is on balance probably the best currently available to us. The remainder of this chapter will seek to defend this claim.

- a) The first criterion – that any framework should allow for the greatest possible freedom of belief – seeks to be as inclusive as possible with regard to a wide variety of different religious and secular beliefs. Given critical realism's commitment to the realistic pursuit of truth, it would appear likely that this criterion will be met if the proposed framework is able to accommodate the views of those anti-realists who find no value whatsoever in the pursuit of truth. As we have seen, critical realism posits an ordered and meaningful reality made up of the realms of the material, mental and possibly transcendent. Broadly speaking, anti-realism takes a number of different forms: strict metaphysical anti-realists deny that there is such a thing as 'reality'; hard versions of idealistic anti-realism reject the existence of

material reality, while softer versions argue for the priority of the mental over the material; epistemological anti-realists deny that we can establish any substantial knowledge of reality (Wright, 2004). My contention here is that in affirming any of these options, or other similar ones, anti-realists are actually saying something positive about the order-of-things, even if this is little more than to affirm the priority of chaos, meaninglessness, or human ignorance. Thus, for example, Richard Rorty makes it plain that, in his view, the network of cause and effect in the natural world is of no deep interest to humanity, that the traditional pursuit of truth and meaning is at root a pointless activity, and that consequently we should focus our efforts on seeking to achieve a liberal utopia by constructing aesthetically satisfying cultural environments in which to live out our lives (Rorty, 1989). Though he would reject the terminology, he is in effect claiming that this is actually how things are ‘in reality’, and in doing so offers a clear understanding of both the ‘true’ nature of reality and the kind of ‘truthful’ behaviour human beings ought to engage in. Because critical realism’s commitment to realism is minimal in its positive assertions, it appears to be robust enough to embrace even those who wish to deny the reality-of-reality-itself. It is of course true that, in starting out from the question of reality, critical realism prioritises a particular set of concerns and as such is not neutral; nevertheless its capacity for inclusivity is noteworthy. Given this fact, the onus would appear to be on those opposed to the proposed framework to come up with a more inclusive one.

- b) The second criterion—that any framework should allow for the greatest possible tolerance of the beliefs of others—requires an open and respectful recognition of difference. In this context, critical realism offers hospitality to a wide range of diametrically opposed viewpoints, including that of secular Liberals deeply suspicious of the value of religious education. As represented by John White, secular Liberals are committed to upholding the ‘freedom of individuals to lead lives of their own’ (Callan & White, 2003, p. 96). There are, of course, those in society who reject this Liberal vision: for instance, religious believers who ‘locate personal well-being in strict obedience to God’ (p. 99). The tensions between religion and secularism reflect the reality of ‘rival understandings of what makes human lives and the societies in which they unfold both good and just’ (p. 96). In this context the pursuit of freedom requires us to bring our ‘basic assumption and conceptual schemes to the bar of critical scrutiny’ (p. 95). When this is done, according to the secular Liberal, religious belief is shown to be based on an inadequate metaphysic that cannot be defended rationally. However, in response, religious believers reject this conclusion by setting out the case for the rationality of religion (Mitchell, 1973; Swinburne, 1981; 1993; 2004). Hence we arrive at a situation which the rival truth claims of secularists and religious adherents are the subject of ongoing debate: if this were not so, evangelical atheists such as Richard Dawkins (1990) would not devote so much time and effort to defending their beliefs. My contention is that the vigour of such debates is a mark of

a healthy pluralistic society, and that the critical framework I am espousing provides a forum within which they can continue. Given the fact that the dispute has yet to be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, should either elect to withdraw in the belief that their case has been proven, they would be acting in a fundamentally intolerant manner. Hence the framework appears to be robust enough to allow for tolerant debate between the extremes of committed religious belief and staunch atheism, and—by implication—many different shades of opinion in-between. Whether all parties elect to engage in the process is a pragmatic issue: my claim here is simply that if the framework of critical realism were adopted then there would be nothing in principle to stop them doing so.

- c) The third criterion—that any framework should seek to maximise reasoned debate between differing belief systems and world-views—assumes a critical approach to education. In the present context the term ‘critical’ is not intended to carry connotations of either thoroughgoing scepticism or a narrowly defined rationalism (Bailin & Siegel, 2003). The kind of critical thinking entailed in the reasoned debate advocated here appeals as a rich notion of reason that combines thought, feeling, reflection and action. In doing so it strives to be open to different conceptions of the nature of reason, as well as to different ways of approaching, understanding and interpreting religion. If, for example, a religious adherent were to claim that the only way to engage genuinely with their beliefs is through feeling, imagination, empathy and spiritual sensibility, then there is no reason why such a view should not be considered alongside more rationalistic or reflective approaches. Critical realism does not require teachers to choose between the two before planning a series of lessons; rather, it anticipates that the question of how best to interpret religion is one with which pupils will grapple with for themselves. The most natural starting point for the formal exploration of religion is that of the various relevant academic disciplines: phenomenology, history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, ethnography, philosophy and theology. Liberal religious education has often been limited by its dependence on either a single discipline, or a narrow cluster of related disciplines. Such self-imposed restrictions avoid a key insight of critical realism, namely that the world is a complex reality that is more likely to reveal its secrets when approached from a number of complementary perspectives. We have already had cause to note the way in which, under the influence of Peter Vardy, religious education at the upper end of secondary schools in Britain has been significantly enhanced by adding the discipline of the philosophy of religion to the standard approach of phenomenological and ethnographic description. The implication is that there is a case for expanding further the range of academic disciplines drawn on by religious educators, as well as for extending their use into the lower secondary and primary levels of schooling. A key virtue of the critical framework proposed here is that it is intentionally open to a range of different academic disciplines.

- d) The fourth criterion—that any framework should seek to cultivate the pursuit of truth and truthful living—is concerned to direct the aims of liberal religious education. One of the key concerns of liberal religious education is to enable citizens to live rich and fulfilled lives. One of the prerequisites of this is that individuals should take responsibility for their beliefs and actions. It is tempting here to equate personal responsibility with autonomy, and from there simply to identify the good life with the exercise of unconstrained freedom. The problem with this, of course, is that all too often our autonomous choices are misdirected and ill-informed. To live a debauched life driven by the desire to consume for the sake of consumption—through, for example, a glut of sex, drugs and shopping—will simply make us slaves to our senses and to the economic structures of consumer-lead capitalism. If we wish our children to live rich and fulfilled lives we must help them to make responsible choices. According to critical realism, such choices are dependent upon a willingness and ability to wrestle with questions about the actual nature of reality. We can, I think, make the point a little stronger: because our children are infinitely valuable, we should teach them to make not just responsible choices but excellent ones. It is at this point that the search for truth and struggle for truthful living coincide: if a choice is to be genuinely excellent, then it ought to be in harmony with the ultimate order-of-things. Of course, whether one believes in God or not, it is always better to be a good person than a bad one. However, if God does exist it is a far better thing to be a good theist than a good atheist; similarly, if God does not exist it is a far better thing to be a good atheist than a good theist. It follows that if, as teachers, we are serious about wanting the very best for our pupils, then we ought to offer them an education that will allow them to pursue truth and strive for truthful living in an informed and reflective manner. Insofar as the core task of religious education is not merely to supplement programmes of social, personal and moral education, but rather to treat the integrity of its subject matter just as seriously as other subject disciplines treat their own, then the primary task of religious education ought to be that of pursuing ultimate truth and truthfulness in the light of a variety of religious belief systems and their secular counterparts. My suggestion is that the framework of an open, sensitive and critical religious education proposed here is more likely to enhance the pursuit of religious truth and truthful living than any other currently available, and as such ought to be given serious consideration, at least until such time as a better framework comes along.

Conclusion

I have argued that in a pluralistic cultural context it is highly unlikely that final agreement will ever be reached on the nature, function and truth of religion and religions. Faced with this situation religious educators cannot hope to ground their subject discipline on any such agreement. The most appropriate way forward is

to look for a loose set of procedural principles that can help facilitate debate between contrasting and contradicting points of view. Such principles will need to maximise freedom of belief, show forbearance towards the beliefs of others, encourage reasoned debate, and focus on issues of ultimate truth and the challenge of living good lives in the light of the ultimate order-of-things. Critical realism offers a philosophical framework compatible with these four heuristic principles. As such it offers a shared starting point for debates surrounding the theory and practice of religious education amongst individuals and groups whose understanding of both truth and truthfulness are deeply incompatible. One last point: the proposed principles and framework are not intended as foundational for religious education, merely as the best working framework currently available to us. As such it will be of value only until such time as a better framework is proposed.

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THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF POSTMODERNITY

Philip Hughes

Research Fellow, Edith Cowan University, Australia

Introduction

Since the beginning of European settlement, most Australians have identified with one of the Christian denominations, although not all have been rigorous in their practice of faith. Some have been enthusiastic about their faith, while others have been lukewarm, and some have felt excluded from its social expressions and its benefits. Most Australians have, at some time in their lives, participated in religious education that has been offered through Sunday school or day school.

Patterns are changing, however. The Australian Community Survey, a survey of 8500 Australian adults randomly selected from electoral rolls in 1998, found that of those people 60 years of age and older, 85 per cent had attended a church or Sunday school as a child. Among Australians in their twenties, just 59 per cent had had such involvement. If these trends continue, the next ten-year age group of Australian children may be the first in which the majority have no memory of involvement in a religious organisation (Bellamy, Black, Castle, Hughes, & Kaldor, 2002).

One reason for the change is the antipathy, and occasionally hostility, towards such education among young people and their parents. Where religious education is occurring, many young people feel negatively towards it. These attitudes and the apparent lack of impact of religious education on the public practice of faith provide good reasons for re-thinking religious education. The first section of this chapter will outline evidence for these attitudes to religious education. The second section will suggest explanations for these attitudes in terms of changes in the nature of religion. The third section will suggest that alternative forms of religious education under the term of 'spiritual literacy' are appropriate, given the changes in the nature of religion. This chapter is based on data gathered in Australia, although the findings reflect general trends found in some other parts of the Western world.

Attitudes to RE

While Catholics have provided religious education through their school system, Protestants have concentrated on Sunday Schools. Yet, in many Australian Protestant churches, Sunday Schools have disappeared. The National Church Life Survey found that 28 per cent of Protestant churches in Australia had no Sunday school or other regular children's activities in 2001 (S. Sterland, personal communication, December 24, 2004). While some churches operate children's clubs and other churches run 'children's church', the educational task of passing on the details of the faith to children is done less systematically or comprehensively than it was in the Sunday Schools. Indeed, many of these children's activities have little educational significance. Churches are finding it difficult to create the occasion for passing on the details of the traditions of faith in a sustained way.

In most States in Australia, government schools have the legal responsibility to provide the opportunity for accredited lay people or clergy from local churches, if available, to provide religious education. No national data are available on how many children receive such religious education, but in the State of Victoria, for example, 49 per cent all government primary school students received some religious education in 2004 (Council for Christian Education in Schools, 2004). At secondary level, there are few classes in religious education in government schools, although some schools, in conjunction with local churches and communities, employ chaplains to provide some spiritual input and contribute to counselling.

Parents have the legal right to withdraw children from classes in religious education in government schools. Few do so, but parents are hesitant about the value of such classes (Hughes, 1998). The Australian Community Survey (1998) found that a little more than half (56%) of the sample of Australian adults thought that religious education in government schools made a worthwhile contribution to children's education. Many were neutral or unsure, and a significant minority (19%) thought that it did not contribute.

Close to one third (31.6% in 2002) of all primary and secondary school students in Australia attend a church-run school (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004). The church-run schools are continuing to increase their share of the educational market. Most of these schools have programs of religious education for all year levels.

One of the least affirmed functions of the churches in Australia is the provision of education, despite the fact that so many students attend a church-run school. Most people are very happy for the churches to provide welfare for the poor, run social activities, develop counselling services and establish accommodation for the homeless. However, Australians are divided about the churches' involvement in general education, partly because of the opportunities this provides the churches for religious education, or, as some would see it, indoctrination. Fifteen per cent of the sample of Australians in the Australian Community Survey (1998) said that churches should NOT provide schools, and another 29 per cent said that it was not important for churches to provide schools. On the other hand, 25 per cent think that providing schools is very important or even the most important contribution the churches make to society.

Most parents of children who go to church-run schools (69% according to the Australian Community Survey) are not active in any religious denomination. More than 70 per cent of parents who chose church-run schools for their children did so on the grounds of the quality of teaching, the standards of school discipline, the climate of care and the values upheld by the school. The Australian Community Survey indicated that only 29 per cent of these parents considered the 'spiritual emphases' of these schools very important in their decision.

Those people who value religion, do so mostly because they see it as promoting moral values, and, in particular, the values of care and compassion. When asked in the Australian Community Survey (1998) why religion was important to them (and 72 per cent of the population said it was important), 55 per cent of the population indicated it was important for giving them values to live by. Most people who see religious education as contributing to students' development, see its value in contributing to commitment to basic ethical values.

A survey of principals and chaplains in schools of the Uniting Church in Australia, conducted in 2002, echoed that hope. Most principals saw religious education as an important part of the school curriculum and perceived it as contributing to moral education. It would help prepare students for adult responsibilities within the context of family, community and nation (Hughes & Bond, 2001).

In 2004, about one hundred and fifty in-depth interviews on religion and spirituality were conducted by the Christian Research Association among students in twelve church-run schools, some Protestant and some Catholic, and three government schools, in three Australian states, as part of a study of youth spirituality (Hughes, 2004c). Some students, including several recent immigrants, were strongly committed to a religious faith and were involved in its practice (Hughes, 2004b). While the study did not attempt to evaluate particular programs of religious education, it found that among those who had a religious commitment more than half were sceptical of the value of religious education. For example, several students expressed the feeling that neither the discussion of ethical and social questions nor the study of the Bible and history of the church related to the personal faith, the inner relationship with God that was central to their experience and understanding of faith. Religious education should be making other students Christian; otherwise there was little point in it, said one student.

Many other students interviewed had little interest in organised religion. Some of these students enjoyed the discussions about social and personal issues that occurred in religious education and felt it was good to learn about other religions. But most felt religious education was peripheral to their lives. At best, it was something that stimulated their curiosity. At worst, it was boring and off-putting. It was not going to help them in their major goals of entering tertiary education, finding a job or exploring ways to enjoy life (Hughes, 2004c).

Other studies have reported similar findings. Flynn and Mok, for example, reported that just 19 per cent of Catholic year 12 students reported that religious education classes were taken seriously by the students, and just 35 per cent said that religious education classes were related to real life and to their own needs (Flynn &

Mok, 2002). A Catholic educator, Graham Rossiter, commented that these findings 'warrant a 'wake-up' call for Catholic school religious education—but not panic' (Rossiter, 2002, p. 54).

Changes in the Nature of Religion

The fact that fewer parents are sending their children to Sunday school and are showing little support for church-based religious education in schools has been interpreted as the result of the secularisation of Australian society (for example, Wilson (1983) and McAllister (1988)). Most of these commentators have seen this process as similar to that described in other parts of the Western world as a consequence of modernisation and the replacement of religious ideas with scientific and technological ones. The picture that the American sociologist, Peter Berger, drew of a long-term process of secularisation in which modernisation necessarily led to 'a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals' (P. L. Berger, 1999, p. 2) has been widely accepted.

Yet, as the twentieth century neared its close, the mood changed. Berger himself changed his mind. While modernisation had had some secularising effects, he said, it had also provoked powerful movements of counter-secularisation. Globally, there has been a resurgence of Pentecostal and evangelical Christians as well as substantial growth in many other conservative religious communities (P. L. Berger, 1999).

Many other sociologists have questioned the secularisation thesis. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke (2000), for example, point to the continuity, even resurgence, of faith, and the fact that faith is found among scientists, who, the thesis would predict, would be most likely to be secular. They also note that there has never been a 'Golden Age' when everyone was highly religious. Other sociologists have argued that contemporary evidence did not fit any of the many versions of the secularisation theory (Lyon, 2000).

Some scholars, such as Steve Bruce (1999), have continued to argue that secularisation is occurring. He suggests that the processes of differentiation, societalisation, rationalisation, and cultural diversity generate secularisation except where religion finds or retains work to do other than relating individuals to the supernatural.

Australian surveys show that, while some sectors of the church are declining, other parts are very much alive and growing (Kaldor, Bellamy, Powell, Castle & Hughes, 1999). Pentecostal and some evangelical denominations have seen continued growth, while most of the decline has occurred in the more liberal sections of the mainstream denominations. There has been some growth in other religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, largely through immigration.

Between 1996 and 2001 the proportion of the population attending a church on a typical Sunday fell from 9.9 per cent to 8.8 per cent continuing a slow but steady decline which began in the 1960s (Bellamy & Powell, 2004). At the same time, there has been a persistence of religious symbols and language. A comparison of six national surveys that have been conducted in Australia between 1969 and 1998

showed that while there was some evidence for a decline in the proportion of the population believing in God, the proportion affirming belief in heaven, life after death, the devil, and hell did not show any clear trends. The evidence suggested there had been an increase in belief in the soul (Hughes, 2001).

Rather than simply disappearing, religion is changing in form. The persistence of religious beliefs, despite decline in organised religion, suggests that the dominant trend is not secularisation but an individualisation of religion. Religion is being seen as something individuals pursue rather than the responsibility of organisations. In so doing, individuals decide for themselves whether they will use the resources offered by religious organisations. I use the term 'spirituality' rather than 'religion' to refer to beliefs and practices related to concepts that transcend the material world but are understood as pertaining to individuals rather than communities and seen as the responsibility of individuals rather than organisations. Hence, the change in form can be expressed in terms of a movement from religion to spirituality. As something constructed by individuals rather than organisations, spirituality takes a great variety of shapes and forms in contemporary Australia (Tacey, 2000).

Preliminary findings of more than 140 interviews with secondary school students on religion and spirituality of Australian young people echoed these trends. Most students interviewed in church-run schools said that they thought people had a spiritual dimension, although they gave a variety of accounts of what this dimension might be (Hughes, 2004c). Almost every student expressed the opinion that they could and would decide for themselves what to believe and practice. The spiritual dimension was seen as personal rather than rooted in their participation in the wider society or in religious communities.

These changes from 'religion' to 'spirituality' may be understood in the context of more general changes occurring in Western culture. From an anthropological perspective, culture is the way of life of a people. It is the habits, the patterns of life that communities or societies adopt (Geertz, 1975). Culture has always been somewhat open-textured, offering people within its patterns, a variety of options. It has always had a dynamic nature, constantly undergoing change. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, there was a dramatic increase in the dynamism and open-weave of culture. Indeed, such was the extent of change that, in many aspects of life, the traditions and habits of past generations were left behind. Rather than one or a few sets of new patterns emerging, it seemed each individual was developing his or her own cultural patterns.

There were many influences that converged at this momentous period in Western history. Among them were increased globalisation and cultural pluralism in the Western world, of which religious pluralism was one part (see, for example, Kurtz, 1995). In concrete terms, increased world travel brought people in touch with many ideas and cultures, as did the mass media.

With new, effective methods of birth control, spiralling costs of bringing up children in the Western world, and new confidence that the great majority of children would live to maturity, family sizes contracted in the 1960s (P. L. Berger,

B. Berger, & Kellner, 1974). Within smaller families, parents sought to meet the needs and interests of each child rather than expect their children to fit in with the needs of the family as a whole. Hence, the focus of life became the individual, rather than a social unit.

From the perspective of their personal needs and interests, and aware of the range of possibilities, young people began constructing life as a series of scenarios, as evolving biographies, rather than as copies of previous generations. This process has been described by one social theorist as seeing the self as a reflexive project (Giddens, 1991). Life was open. From the simple things such as the patterns of eating to the basic structures of family life and the relationships between males and females, every aspect of life was seen as negotiable.

Religion had provided, in each culture, basic frameworks for how people saw the world. Through those frameworks, the structures of life and society had been justified and their rules given prescriptive force. While science had increasingly taken the primary role in Europe in providing details of the framework since the Renaissance, the idea that God had created the universe and human society and had ordained both the laws of nature and the moral rules for society persisted among the majority of European populations and their diasporas until the 1960s.

Within the changed nature of culture, the very idea of there being one basic framework for seeing the world became untenable for many people (Bruce, 1999). The awareness of the plurality of cultures meant an awareness of the many frameworks for seeing the world and the many ways of justifying the structures of life and society. There was no need to adopt one worldview to the exclusion of all others. If an individual chose a particular worldview or set of cultural patterns, it was on the basis of personal preference.

Within this context, religion has re-emerged in the form for which I have used the term 'spirituality' within the reflexivity of modern social life, a resource that people use as they find it personally helpful. Some individuals choose the certainty provided by conservative religious movements (Giddens, 1994). Others choose to explore the variety of spiritual resources associated with Eastern religions, the New Age, and nature religions. For both groups, spirituality is no longer the tradition into which one is born and which provides the framework for cultural life. Rather, it is a set of resources from which one can choose according to personal needs and tastes.

This individualistic approach in the religious or spiritual dimension of life has been evident in several ways. For example, the National Church Life Survey (1996) of the church attendees of most denominations in Australia found that there was considerable movement in and out of churches and between churches of different denominations, particularly amongst younger people. For example, of those worshipping in a Pentecostal church in 1996, 28 per cent had transferred in from another denomination within the last five years and 15 per cent of that number had transferred out to another denomination. Ten per cent of them had begun attending without previous involvement in a church elsewhere, but 17 per

cent of that number had drifted out and were no longer worshipping anywhere (Kaldor et al., 1999).

For many people, an individualistic approach meant pursuing religion outside of organisational structures. There has been widespread disaffection with religious organisations with only 39 per cent of Australian adults expressing much confidence in religious organisations (Bellamy et al., 2002).

This disaffection is partly reflected in the increasing proportion of Australians describing themselves as having 'no religion': from 0.4 per cent of the population in 1961 to 15.5 per cent in 2001. Analysis showed, however, that this failure to explicitly identify with any religious group did not mean that all spirituality was rejected. Of those who described themselves as having 'no religion' in the Australian Community Survey (1998), almost half (49%) said that having a spiritual life was important to them. A similar proportion of them said they believed in God or some sort of spirit or life-force (Hughes, 2004a).

The individualistic approach has been evident in some of the new religious and spiritual groups as they organise themselves in shop-front styles, rather than seek to build communities. For example, practitioners of yoga and Eastern meditation hold classes in adult education centres. They orient themselves to the provision of resources for the individual, rather than build communities of people who share their beliefs and commitments. The Australian Community Survey (1998) found that 12 per cent of Australian adults had practiced Eastern meditation in the year prior to the survey. Only 7 per cent of those practicing, however, identified themselves as either Buddhist or Hindu. For most, meditation was another practice, a technique, that might be helpful to them as individuals, not something deeply rooted in a religious community requiring a change in their identity.

Religion and spirituality have not disappeared under the weight of the processes of secularisation, but have re-emerged in more individualistic forms among the younger generations. Nevertheless, the salience of these emergent forms should not be over-emphasised. The Australian Community Survey (1998) asked about the importance of a spiritual life in the context of a range of twenty-two life principles. One third of the sample of the adult population said that spiritual life was 'very important' to them. Indeed, 4.5 per cent of the sample said that 'having a spiritual life' was the most important principle of life. However, for the majority of people, spirituality came at the bottom of the list. Peace, honesty, friendship, social justice, politeness were much more strongly affirmed. Indeed, out of a list of twenty-two values, 'a spiritual life' was number 20 in rank order of importance (Hughes, Bond, Bellamy, & Black, 2003).

Religion is an important part of the identity of just 21 per cent of the Australian adult population, rating below ethnicity, education, occupation, income, gender and personality. It is important mostly to recent immigrants for whom religion and ethnicity are closely related and to those few Australians who feel that the religious group to which they belong has some exclusive claims to truth (Hughes, Black, Bellamy, & Kaldor, 2004). There is little evidence in Australia of religious identity providing a basis for the 'cultural wars' found in some other countries.

What does this Mean for Religious Education?

The analysis above points to a context that has the following characteristics:

1. an openness to spirituality, although the spiritual life is not high on the list of personal priorities;
2. a minority of the population actively and frequently participating in organised religion, but a majority suspicious of religious organisations;
3. an assumption among almost all young people that they will personally decide what to believe and practice.

The several arenas in which religious education occurs in Australian society will inevitably address those aspects of the Australian context somewhat differently. Religious organisations have the duty to explain to those who attend them what they believe and why they encourage certain practices. Nevertheless, they will recognise that, within the pluralist Australian context, children, including those raised within the context of a religious community, will make their own decisions about faith and practice in due course.

Some religious schools in Australia are run explicitly for members of a particular religious organisation or group and some require that parents of students attend worship within that group. In terms of religious education, the sociologist might comment that however carefully parents and schools might seek to insulate children from the multiplicity of influences in the wider culture, they are unlikely to be successful (Hughes, 2002). It would be realistic for these organisations to prepare children to make their own decisions about faith and practice in the context of an awareness of the plurality of the wider culture.

Other religious schools cater for children from many backgrounds. While parents send their children to religious schools in the knowledge that the school will encourage commitment to certain beliefs and practices, such schools should respect the variety of backgrounds from which the children come and the pluralistic context in which they live. If the Australian cultural context lays on young people the responsibility of making their own decisions about belief and practice and the development of their own spirituality, young people should be prepared for that.

Most church-run schools in Australia have retained some confessional elements relating to Christian faith and their particular denominational heritage, including services of worship that take place within the context of school life. However, there has been a movement away from confessional approaches and towards description of the variety of religious belief systems and practices and open-ended discussions of ethical and social issues in religious education (Buchanan, 2003). Understanding the variety of religions is important not just in terms of preparing students for their own decisions but helping students to understand the people who live around them.

Preparation for making decisions about directions in life and faith and understanding the decisions and orientations of others should be part of education in

government-run schools as well as church-run schools. Students in these schools will be faced with the same issues as they find their place as adults in the same pluralistic cultural environment as students of church-run schools. Parents will have decided on their preferences and will naturally have a considerable influence on their children. But such influences will not necessarily equip their children for making their own decisions. At the same time, it is not the place of government-run schools in an avowedly multi-cultural society to encourage particular forms of spirituality.

Various approaches to religious education are currently practiced in Australian schools. Some take a phenomenological approach concerned not just to describe the variety of religions but to understand the universal nature of religion itself (Marvell, 1982). However, there is still debate within religious studies as to whether such a universal essence of religion can be identified. Does such an approach do justice to the various components of religion to which Smart has drawn attention (e.g. Smart, 1997). As Jackson (1997) has asked, does such an approach do justice to the variety of religious experiences and expressions?

In an attempt to find the relevance of religious education in a postmodern pluralist situation, it has been suggested that religious education revolve around the exploration of personal narratives. Advocates of such an approach, such as Clive and Jane Erricker (2000), start with the spiritual, emotional and moral needs of the students. The aim of religious education is to facilitate the children's own construction of a spirituality, rather than to encourage them to adopt an ideology or meta-narrative which has been packaged by a particular religious organisation.

This approach accords well with the finding noted above that, in Australia, most students approach religious faith from a personal and individualistic perspective, choosing what they want from the various traditions and religious resources. However, as Jackson (2004) notes, this approach would not be acceptable or readily understood by those children who come from backgrounds where religious traditions are seen as real descriptions of the world and where the tradition is accepted as a whole package. Among those in Australia who would not appreciate such an approach are many recent immigrants (Hughes, 2004b) as well as some from conservative religious backgrounds. In some way, the variety of religious and spiritual traditions, with their different epistemological stances, needs to be respected.

Combining the strengths of the postmodern approach of the Errickers in its existential interests and aims, with the strengths of the descriptive and phenomenological approaches which seek to take the variety of religious experiences, practices and belief systems seriously, is the 'religious literacy' approach to religious education. Andrew Wright (1996), for example, argues that

the mark of the religiously educated child ...would be his or her ability to think, act and communicate with insight and intelligence in the light of that diversity of religious truth claims that are the mark of our contemporary culture (p. 175).

Jackson adds to Wright's perspectives the recognition of 'the inner diversity, fuzzy edgedness and contested nature of religious traditions as well as the complexity of cultural expression and the change from social to individual perspectives' (Jackson, 2004, p. 87).

Wright and Jackson, along with others, see religious education as allowing children to identify and articulate their already held spiritual values, commitment and worldviews. It also involves clarifying and refining these spiritual commitments (Jackson, 2004). However, most Australian students do not have clearly articulated religious or spiritual commitments. There are many functional alternatives within Australian society that provide a basis for a sense of identity, place and purpose. There are many resources to which Australian students turn to deal with the problems of life or to find a sense of peace and happiness (Hughes, 2004c; Hughes & Black, 1999). Given this variety, it would seem appropriate that what has been called religious education occur within the broader framework I would entitle a 'spiritual literacy approach'.

With the aim of helping young people to evaluate, develop, clarify and commit to specific ways of living in the world, of which religious ways provide specific alternatives, this 'spiritual literacy' approach has a descriptive component. But it is not just about knowledge of the religious traditions. It aims at building skills in making decisions about life, religious faith and spiritual resources. It also aims at developing the skills of translating commitment into action. Nevertheless, it is different from confessional approaches in that it does not assume that students already have a commitment to a specific community or will move into a specific community of faith.

Three major components are necessary for spiritual literacy, similar to those which have been identified as necessary for making moral decisions (Wilson, Williams, & Sugarman, 1967): knowledge, skills of evaluating, and skills of translating commitment into action.

Knowledge of Resources and Possibilities

Several areas of knowledge and skill are important to spiritual literacy. The first is knowledge about the options: the resources and the possibilities. To make decisions about spiritual resources, young people need information about them. Detailed description of beliefs and rituals of all major religions may not be necessary, but knowledge that these options are available and how people have found them to be helpful in life and in society is apt.

In general, priority should be given to those religious traditions that have had the most influence on the historical and cultural background from which the young people come and which have contributed most to the context in which they live. If such education keeps close to the world of the students themselves, it will focus on the ways that religions, philosophies and ways of life are experienced, rather than on the details of the traditions. It will draw from the experiences of those people who have chosen those options and used those resources. It will provide

opportunities for students to assimilate these options and possibilities into their own frameworks of thinking.

In its descriptive content, the 'spiritual literacy approach' will focus not only on the Western expressions that most world religions have developed. It will also be important to cover, at least to some extent, some of the new religious movements. It will be even more important to look at the options of hedonistic life-styles, family-oriented life-styles, the natural world as a source of peace, and travel as a means to finding one's identity.

Skills of Evaluating

To make choices, students must be trained to evaluate, to identify what is good and what is bad, what is worthwhile and what is worthless. Such skills involve knowledge about the roots of revelation and authority in religion, about the implications and consequences of adopting a particular religious stance, and about those forms of reasoning that are pertinent to the acceptance or rejection of religious beliefs and practices. Faith choices are not simply leaps into the unknown. While human beings cannot agree conclusively on the superiority of any particular religion, the evaluation process is not irrational. Rather, the evidence and the issues to be considered in evaluation are so many and so complex that the evaluation process cannot be readily brought to a conclusion. Yet, some choices fit more easily into the world that is known through observation and experience, while other choices are evidently unsatisfactory.

Similarly, the choice of way of life is not simply a matter of taste. Choices have consequences for the individual and for the wider society. Do those who choose to seek peace and wellbeing through travel, or through the accumulation of possessions, for example, really find what they are looking for? Does the drug scene provide a solution to human problems?

People often make their own choices as a result of personality orientations or the influences of peers or family. Yet, there are reasons why some options can be more readily dismissed than others. It is important that young people are fully prepared for the responsibilities of the decisions that they will inevitably make.

Translating Commitment into Action

Beyond skills of making decisions about faith are the skills of translating one's commitments into actions. This is a considerable challenge in a formal educational environment, but might be approached through the development of a variety of small group activities within a school or other social context through which those commitments could be applied. Different groups might explore yoga, Eastern meditation, and Christian forms of meditation and prayer. Other groups might seek cross-cultural experiences, and, in small and manageable ways, seek to live within a different community for a while, absorbing and reflecting on its values and lifestyle, its beliefs and rituals.

Groups might explore commitment to social justice and ways of engaging the wider community in such issues. Or a group might work for the wellbeing of a group of people with special needs, putting into practice the ideals of compassion common to many religions. Another group might explore the spirituality of nature and its implications for living in accord with principles of a sustainable environment.

The Aims of Spiritual Literacy

At the heart of the whole educational enterprise is the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Both primary and secondary education prepare young people to meet the demands of living in the adult world in ways that are beneficial to their own wellbeing and that of the wider society. The contemporary Australian context places on young people the demands of living reflexively in relation to spirituality as well as many other aspects of life.

We are now in the midst of epoch-making changes in culture and the very nature of religion. Given the fact that contemporary culture has 'imposed' on the individual the necessity of making personal decisions about religious faith and spirituality as well as many other choices for life, the need is more urgent than ever for education that will prepare students for those choices. The reflexivity in the spiritual domain that is demanded of students in the Western world requires the development of knowledge, skills of evaluating and the ability to translate commitment into action. To do that, religious education, perhaps best described as the education of the human spirit or spiritual literacy, must focus on the choices of life and the skills in making personal choices in belief and practice for the wellbeing of individuals and society.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP IN POSTMODERN SOCIETIES

Fernand Ouellet

University of Sherbrooke, Canada

Introduction

Intercultural education is generally recognised as an important component of citizenship education. In the last decade, there has been a growing interest in citizenship education in many democratic countries together with an explosion in the number of publications on the subject. This renewal of interest has several possible explanations: the difficulty of maintaining a climate of learning in schools located in depressed areas (Costa-Lascoux, 2000); the ‘perverse effects’ of multi-cultural policies that give insufficient attention to the basis of social cohesion upon which an opening to diversity can be built (Ouellet, 1992; 2002a); and the anxieties raised by the deep transformations of a society in crisis. Galichet (1998) claims that this interest appears regularly ‘each time society is uncertain about its foundations, facing problems and dissensions threatening its existence and raising questions about its legitimacy’ (p. 1). According to Galichet, the legitimacy of the values crisis is one of the fundamental issues of citizenship education, the second being what he calls the ‘scandal of inequalities’.

In this chapter, I shall suggest that an exploration both of symbolic systems and of questions of meaning can help students to face this crisis in the legitimacy of values. First, I shall show that the crisis is part of a deeper crisis of politics in postmodern democracies. Citizenship education is generally seen as an attempt to prepare young people to face that crisis. However, the implementation of citizenship education in the school curriculum is made more difficult because of the extent of disagreement on the aims of such a program. In the second part of this chapter, the reconciliation of key values underlying the main initiatives in this area will be suggested as a means to resolve that problem. In the last part, I shall refer to the present debate on this issue in Quebec, and suggest some of the conditions to be respected if religious education is to make a significant contribution to inter-cultural and citizenship education.

The Crisis in the Legitimacy of Values within Contemporary Western Societies

Galichet (1998) argues that the changes affecting Western democracies are so deep and pervasive that it is no longer possible to rely on classical approaches when it comes to determining the legitimacy of the values underlying citizenship education. He provides an interesting analysis of the process leading to this crisis. According to him, in the classical republican concept, there was only one principle of legitimacy: 'universal suffrage built upon the idea of human and citizens' rights constituting the preamble and the leading thread of all democratic debate' (Galichet, 1998, p. 134). This principle of legitimacy, he states, can be subdivided into three fundamental principles which seem harmoniously integrated:

- *theoretical* reason, i.e. what would be called today, expertise. It determines and delimits the field of what is possible;
- *aesthetic* reason, i.e. the confrontation of the judgments, exigencies, hopes of those who would be called today the 'militants' (of political parties, but also of associative movements). It feeds and focuses the debate by defining – in multiform and contradictory ways – the desirable;
- finally, *practical* reason, symbolised by elections at universal suffrage and the representation which results from it. It decides what will be effectively realised and accomplished.

The present legitimacy crisis, in his view, comes primarily from recent changes, which have destroyed the harmony between these principles postulated in the classical vision:

- expertise, heir of the former theoretical reason, seems itself divided and torn apart: on all burning issues – pollution, AIDS, etc. – experts confront each other and each camp has its own opinion, so that the expression 'battle of experts' indicates the extent to which since Condorcet, science has become an issue instead of being the tribunal which, for a while, scientists dreamed it was;
- universal suffrage too has been split with the diversification of the levels of democracy (local, regional, national, European, indeed global with the multiplication of international conventions having priority over national rights). Everyone knows there are conflicts between these levels and that they cannot always be resolved;
- citizen mobilisation takes a growing importance with the extension of the political field towards issues such as urbanisation, health, and the environment which directly affect daily life. This has given rise to militant resistance movements. Sometimes these movements are instigated by associative movements; sometimes they are purely spontaneous. For instance, more than once, high school manifestations have forced the legal powers to retreat and abandon projects formally approved by parliament (Galichet, 1998).

According to Galichet, these endless conflicts between experts, militants and politicians partially invalidate the classical model used to establish the validity of common moral norms: the constant fluctuation of public and private morals. He gives the example of hygiene:

In the manuals of the end of the nineteenth century, hygienic practice was presented as a social, indeed a moral duty, and dirtiness was associated with alcoholism, and alcoholism was itself associated with theft and depravity [....] These practices have progressively been transferred to the field of personal initiative. Each couple can freely choose among the proliferating panoply of child rearing manuals on the market (Galichet, 1998, p. 137).

The Crisis of Politics and of Citizenship in 'Postmodern' Democracies

Galichet's reading of the contemporary crisis of values is interesting, but it must be placed in the wider context of the crisis of politics in modern democracies. The idea of citizenship is a modern project: the emancipation of individuals from traditional hierarchies, and their autonomous control of their collective destiny were at the centre of this project (Gauchet, 1998; Schnapper, 2000). However, in a perceptive analysis of the transformation of American society, Manfred Bishoff (1999) shows that this control by citizens of their collective destiny has less and less meaning in the contemporary context of labor rights. In the present 'postmodern' context, collective decisions are less and less in the hands of citizens. The practice of citizenship has been progressively destroyed in the double process of a *politicisation of economics* and of an *economisation of politics*.

When the state started to intervene in the economic field, it fell progressively under the control of the economic lobbies of businesses on the one hand and of the labor unions on the other. Moreover, the incorporation of the state within the organisational system has in practice meant its subordination to capitalist economy. The fragmentation and dispersion of the sovereign power of the state and the obliteration of the distance between the modern state and civil society have had serious consequences for the functioning of democracy. The state has lost the capacity to constitute itself as the place of reference, arbitration and representation for the multiple particular and contradictory interests that exist. It is no longer the protector of the 'general interest'. The voice of citizens has less and less importance. Henceforth, only associations (or pressure groups speaking for them) or businesses (curiously named 'moral persons') are actually acknowledged.

In this context, the state is increasingly relegated to the roles of simple mediator and guarantor of the contracts signed by various organisations which function as autonomous and self-governing sub-systems. Their integration within society is

no longer, as in modernity, realised on the politico-institutional level, but on a *decisional-organisational* level (Freitag, 1994). These sub-systems constitute what Bischoff calls 'the social system of postmodernity':

Citizenship's dissolution thus goes along with the dissolution of political power. Postmodernity has replaced both by a number of instances and places of organisational participation which form a system in which the only social and 'political' existence of the individual is through his participation in organisations which have been substituted to him and to the state in the very person of the *social subject* (Bischoff, 1999, p. 420).

In the light of these analyses the crisis underlying the present interest in citizenship education appears still deeper than the one to which Galichet refers in his history of citizenship in France. What has become problematic is the idea of citizenship itself; and also the idea of politics, understood formerly as the control by citizens themselves of their collective destiny. Marcel Gauchet (1998, 2002) shares this conviction that the present situation of democracy is radically different from what it was in the period of triumphant modernity and that the present crisis is completely different from the 'modern crisis'. At the center of this present crisis, according to Gauchet, there is a disequilibrium created by the present hegemony of human rights, which impose themselves on the collective consciousness 'as the only tool available to think of coexistence and to guide the work of the collectivity on itself' (Gauchet, 2002, p. 347). This disrupts the equilibrium between the three essential components of any democracy: the judicial, the political and the socio-historical. Thus 'human rights' becomes an ideology which contributes to the process of making more obscure the way democracy functions:

In short, [human rights] advantageously replace the sciences of society and the theory of history, summarising the essence of what there is to know about what constitutes human communities and what they can hope to be. This evangelical simplicity is not the least of their seduction (Gauchet, 2002, p. 348).

Gauchet is deeply anxious about the future of democracy in a society with no mobilising project, one where politics is discredited and where human rights occupy all the space. He sees a link between the present crisis of politics and what he calls the 'exit of the religious', the victory of autonomy over heteronomy. This very victory explains why today democracy has lost momentum:

Even for a consciousness deeply convinced of one's debt towards the divine, the incarnation in a spiritual authority of this world of a dependency on the beyond does not mean anything for anyone. Even as a symbol of nostalgia, it does not mobilise any inspiration. At the same time, the image of autonomy which proceeded from it has lost its dynamic spring. It has been trivialised

through its triumph. It does not have as its objective a difficult ascension; it is now nothing more than the primary and down to earth data of our condition (Gauchet, 2002, p. 348).

We live now in a disenchanted world. We must say goodbye to what was the main spirit of the political debate during the period of triumphant modernity: the struggle against the religious visions which deprived people of their capacity to decide by themselves their collective destiny:

It has become incongruous and ludicrous to mix up the idea of God with the norm of human society, and even more to dream of some conjunction between the necessities of the earth and the inspiration of heaven. [...] Nothing in our experience, whether it is in knowledge, moral rule, art or politics has any kinship or communication of any sort with anything beyond human beings. [...] In other words, autonomy has won; [...] and that changes everything. (Gauchet, 2002, P. 86–87).

This victory of autonomy over heteronomy radically modifies the nature of relations between political powers and religion. The state cannot rely on one set of particular religious beliefs to legitimise its policies. Nevertheless, it must find legitimacy, and refer to values put forward by religious groups of varying convictions. Willaime gives a good description of the new importance given to religion in the public sphere:

This socio-religious configuration creates a new situation where the religious is no longer present in its pre-modern form of traditions resistant to swaggering modernity. [...] If democracy has been historically in conflict with religions, are we not presently witnessing a situation reversal where religions could bring welcomed support to democracies in their quest for legitimacy? (Willaime, 2004, p. 209, 258)

Willaime (2004) gives many examples of the greater presence of religion in public space. According to him, many citizens welcome the interventions of religious leaders in defense of the principles of democracy, even if ‘they do not accept any intervention of the Churches in their private life or any attempt to control it’ (p. 258). In this new situation, the classical republican approach does not work any more. What is needed is a form of laicity which does not try to eliminate all references to religion in the public space and in public institutions. In the post-modern situation, religion cannot be confined to the private sphere. It is no more possible today to view laicity as ‘an alternative system to religions’. It appears rather as a principle for the regulation of religious convictions present in civil society (Milot, 2002).

The New Configuration of Belief in Postmodern Societies

Gauchet’s analysis throws an interesting light on the particularities of the present period of history and on the profound sources of this crisis in the legitimacy of values by which it is characterised. However, it is not only the relation of

politics and religion which has been transformed by the victory of autonomy over heteronomy in post-modern democracies. This victory has equally radically modified the individual's relations to belief. The relationship of the individual to belief typical of pre-modern societies has already been deeply modified in the modern situation of the last two centuries:

Hence that paradox, that faith has the tendency to become more intransigent and more imperialist than when it was the 'faith of our fathers' by being unconsciously invaded by the individualist values of modernity [...]. In that phase, when it stops being customary and becomes obligatorily the choice of a person, it can only have meaning if it claims to be universally imperative as unique and exclusive truth (Gauchet, 1998, pp. 128–129).

In the context of triumphant modernity, belief is frequently intolerant; and it is understandable that the promoters of democracy preach tolerance. In post-modern democracies, the central value is no longer tolerance but pluralism, 'not the simple resignation to the fact that some people do not think like you', but:

the integration by the believer, in relation to his own belief, of the legitimacy of other beliefs [...]. This intimate relativisation of belief is the characteristic product of our century, the fruit of the penetration of the democratic spirit within the spirit of belief itself (Gauchet, 1998, pp. 129–130).

All this leads to a radical transformation of the relation of the individual to religion. Religion does not represent any longer a transcendent realm imposing itself on individuals; now, it has only an instrumental value for their personal growth. The otherworld is put at the service of this world. In this way, religions tend effectively to align themselves with secular philosophies and wisdoms. Religion is now on the same level as the secular wisdoms, 'the good life in this world' (Gauchet, 1998, p. 149). This is another index of the victory of autonomy over heteronomy. In post-modern democracies, it is not the content of beliefs which is important, but the contribution they make to the individual project of giving meaning to one's life:

What counts, in this case, is not theism or atheism, nor transcendence or immanence, nor this worldly or otherworldly orientation, but the capacity of providing a global view of the world and of human beings, susceptible of giving ultimate justification to individual and collective options. Apart from this, whether the place of the metaphysician is taken by a materialist in despair with our solitude in the universe, by a respectable humanist or by a spiritualist confident in the excellence of creation, is of little importance as long as there is metaphysics (Gauchet, 1998, pp. 144–145).

Nowadays, morals, as the 'capacity of providing for oneself the reasons orienting one's conduct [...], has become central for the auto-constitution of the individual' (Gauchet, 1998, p. 146). However, contrary to the expectations of some prophets of secularisation, this transformation of the individual's relation to religion has not meant the disappearance of religion, but rather a diversification of the spiritual

demand. Many individuals have departed from the 'believing line' (Hervieu-Léger, 2001, p. 71) of their own religious tradition. They try to give meaning to the events and to the world around them in joining in spiritual tradition which has a multiplicity of forms.

Hervieu-Léger (2001) agrees with Gauchet's analysis on this point. Like other sociologists, she observes the 'individualisation and subjectivisation of belief' in contemporary societies. Inquiries have shown that only two percent of Swiss citizens and six percent of French agree with the following statement: 'All religions are respectable, but only mine is true'. She notes a '...disqualification of the traditional mode of validation of the religious truth' and 'a weakening of the familial structure of religious transmission which previously linked an individual to a patrimony of symbolic goods received in heritage and which had the responsibility of transmitting these to the following generation' (Hervieu-Léger, 2001, p. 128). She quotes the 1990 inquiry into the values of French citizens which revealed that only four percent of parents placed religious faith first of the fundamental values they wished to transmit to their children.

Hervieu-Léger provides interesting comments on the new forms of belief in this new context. Those beliefs are oriented toward this world, since 'the obsessive care for the other world seems about to disappear'. Eighty-six percent of French citizens believe that 'the meaning of life is to take the best out of it'. Religion, she states, '...interests our contemporaries in so far as it 'does good', a good that can be felt by everyone in the various aspects of their life on earth' (Hervieu-Léger, 2001, p. 77).

In this context, of the weakening of traditional religious institutions and of the subjectivisation of belief, the question of religious and moral education at school takes on a new meaning. The struggle between the partisans of a confessional school system and those of a secular one, offering no teaching on questions of meaning and on religion, belongs to another time. We are now witnessing a 'laicisation of laicity' (Willaime, 2001, p. 221) that becomes more open to a teaching of the religious fact in schools. Many partisans of a secular education recognise that the ignorance of the rising generations about the religious traditions of their country and of the world presents serious risks for democracy, for relationships between members of pluralistic societies and for understanding between nations. This concern raises the question of citizenship education and of the place in that education for an exploration of symbolic systems and a reflection on questions of meaning.

Citizenship Education in 'Postmodern' Democracies

Obviously, these profound transformations of 'post-modern' democracies have repercussions on the way citizenship education can be conceived today. Galichet (1998) provides some interesting clues for the definition of what citizenship should be in this new situation. In the post-modern context, citizenship education can only be learning to manage these contradictory legitimacies which tear apart societies and individuals. 'Henceforth, citizenship education cannot be separated

from conflict education and conflict management. What is at stake here is not only a conflict of opinion or of interest, but also a conflict of legitimacies or norms' (Galichet, 1998, pp. 142–143).

Society is no longer characterised by 'a coherent and well-determined corpus of values, but rather by multiple and exclusive norms' (Galichet, 1998, p. 143). It is then not to be expected that there will be a complete correspondence between teachers' values and those of various groups of citizens. Neither can it be expected that citizens will profess a kind of common morals, which would be those of their group. Yet one cannot be satisfied with the relativist and individualistic acknowledgement that 'everyone has his own values', since it would mean 'the negation of all education, and, moreover, also of all thinking' (Galichet, 1998, p. 144). In the present context, it is not sufficient to promote the recognition and respect of the other. It is also necessary to learn how to shake 'identity bumptiousness' (Galichet, 1998, p. 144), and to become interested in the other beyond differences and value conflicts. Galichet advocates a 'conflict pedagogy' (Galichet, 1998, p. 144) as a solution to the crisis in the legitimacy of values. This pedagogy is in harmony with a conception of citizenship education where the study of controversial issues occupies a central place (Crick, 1998; Lorcerie, 2002). Such an approach to citizenship education appears particularly well adapted to the situation of tension between many legitimate conceptions of citizenship (Pagé, 2001). It can recognise the inevitable tensions between the diverse conceptions of citizenship and the preoccupations/values underlying initiatives in this area (Ouellet, 2002b). It is in line with recent philosophical discussions on deliberative democracy and on the means to reach a *modus vivendi* on controversial issues about which it will never be possible to reach a consensus (Bonin, 2001; Duhamel & Weinstock, 2001; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Pourtois, 1993; Weinstock, 2000; 2001).

Citizenship and Citizenship Education: A Diversity of Conceptions

The implementation of programs of citizenship education in the school curriculum faces many obstacles (Costa-Lascoux, 2000; McAndrew, 2004). Among those obstacles, the diversity of conceptions of citizenship makes it difficult to reach an agreement on the nature of this new school subject.

Pagé (2001) distinguishes four conceptions in the writing of scholars describing citizenship as it is experienced by citizens today: 1) the *liberal* conception, which insists on *the rights protecting citizens' freedom* to invest in their personal, familial and professional achievements, without too much concern for civic participation, except when these rights are threatened; 2) the *pluralist deliberative* conception, which insists on *participation in the political community's deliberation*, the only guarantee that the decisions which are taken for the common good will be acceptable compromises for citizens of various allegiances; 3) *differentiated civil citizenship*, which also insists on *participation, but only in civil society*, where citizens believe they can more efficiently contribute to the creation of common goods satisfying the

converging aspirations of the communities or groups to which they belong; 4) the *unitary national* conception which favors the affirmation of a *strong collective identity* as the basis of society's cohesion, and for the respect of citizens' rights. According to Pagé, it is not possible for the researcher to opt for one or the other of these four theoretical conceptions of citizenship, since they are all 'legitimate in view of the fundamental norm of integral equality of all citizens in a democratic society' (Pagé, 2001, p. 50). They represent a 'diversity of formulas of citizenship which citizenship education should explore as legitimate ways to experience citizenship' (Pagé, 2001, p. 10). Only empirical research can determine which of these formulae wins the support of citizens.

The development of a program of citizenship education requires that these various concepts of citizenship be taken into account. However, this diversity of conceptions can make more difficult an agreement on the goal of such a program. A disagreement on such a fundamental question is likely to weaken any attempt to give this subject more importance in the school curriculum.

A recent study on the early implementation of a program of citizenship education in England and Wales, namely that of the Crick Report and its impact on religious education is a good illustration of this problem (Watson, 2004). The Crick Report (1998) attempted to define the orientations of this program. However, according to Watson, it did not adequately define the program's aims. The report consequently can be used to support both a radical, critical vision and a conservative vision of citizenship education. For those who read it from a critical perspective, the report aims at the 'empowerment of independently-minded young people in a complex, diverse, global context' (Watson, 2004, p. 264). From a conservative perspective, citizenship education's main objective would be 'the control of young people's behavior and the unification of a pluralist society under one nation' (Watson, 2004, pp. 264–265). Educators are then caught in a dilemma: should citizenship education be used to reinforce the status quo or to question some aspects of present social arrangements? The religious education experts involved in the inquiry were generally hostile to a narrow and conservative conception of citizenship education which tried to instill moral, social and political values, instead of questioning them and 'worrying about national unity instead of dialoguing with diversity' (Watson, 2004, p. 266).

This difficulty can be alleviated if we try to identify the main values underlying any initiative in this area. These initiatives must find an equilibrium between three main values: openness to diversity, social cohesion and equality. Citizenship education can be defined as an educational initiative aiming at a reconciliation of eight preoccupations/values: the preservation of cultural diversity, the adaptation of institutions to diversity in all its forms, social cohesion in a context of pluralist values, critical participation in society and in democratic deliberation, equality and equity, solidarity with oppressed groups, and the preservation of biological diversity and sustainable development (Ouellet, 2002a). These values can be used as standards to evaluate the various initiatives claiming the citizenship education label, and the learning goals of these initiatives.

Religion Education: An Important Form of Inter-Cultural and Citizenship Education

The religious options of individuals and of groups of conviction constitute a particularly sensitive zone where there is deep disagreement in contemporary Western societies. Moral and religious values constitute one of the spheres where the passage from modernity to post-modernity has wrought the deepest transformations. An education that does not prepare citizens to face such transformations would certainly be incomplete. Yet, how can it do this in a situation where it is necessary to respect both the secular nature of the schools and state neutrality towards religious and secular life stances? This is the question I should like to explore briefly in the light of recent developments in the public school system of Quebec.

Very often, those who are interested in religion and religious education are deeply committed to a specific religious tradition. Many advocates of religious education in public schools rely on a religious vision of the spiritual development of the child, and of the school mission in this area. Any form of religious education that does not adopt such a perspective runs the risk of being discredited. Nonetheless, in 1999, a special Committee of the Ministry of Education recommended the replacement of confessional religious education by a program of 'cultural teaching on religions'. (Gouvernement du Québec, 1999, p. 67). This recommendation has been rejected by the advocates of confessional religious education. However, recent research (Milot & Ouellet, 2004) has shown that many parents, teachers and religious leaders agreed with this recommendation.

In 2000, the Quebec government opted for a compromise. Confessional religious education was retained for Catholics and Protestants at the primary level and for the first three years of the secondary level. A program of moral education was also offered as an option for all primary and lower secondary pupils. A new program of ethics and religious culture was to be created for the last two years of high school. At all levels, the time for religious education was reduced almost by half. This requires derogation from the Canadian Charter of Rights, since it gives a 'privilege' to Catholics and Protestants. This clumsy compromise has created a crisis, since it was perceived by many teachers as a move towards the elimination of any teaching on religion in schools.

In its recent advice to the minister of education (Comité des affaires religieuses [CAR], 2004), the Committee of Religious Affairs recommends the replacement of the system of options between religious education and moral education by a common program of 'religion education' and moral education. There would be no more an option between religious education and moral education: both would be compulsory for all students. As defined by the Committee of Religious Affairs, 'religion education' differs both from confessional religious education and from the teaching of the religious fact as defined by the Debray Report (2002). The contribution of this program to personal development, and to citizenship education, is the main line of argument put forward by the Committee to justify the substantial investment that the implementation of such a program will require.

The Committee of Religious Affairs defines four essential areas of learning that would be the focus of this program:

- Enabling students to take a stance in relation to the universe of beliefs, which presupposes a clear understanding of their own options.
- Promoting knowledge and acknowledgement of others, thereby enabling others to feel that they are recognised for who they are.
- Leading them to reflect on their own beliefs, thereby enabling them to acquire the tolerance they need to recognise that the convictions of other people are deserving of respect.
- Teaching them moderation in the social affirmation of their identity, which, based on reciprocity, facilitates relationships with people who subscribe to different beliefs (CAR, 2004).

The recommendations of the Committee of Religious Affairs agree on many points with the views developed by Robert Jackson (1997; 2004a; 2004b) in the British context. In the post-modern context presented briefly here, it is clear that religion education has an important and original contribution to inter-cultural and citizenship education in these four areas of learning. A democratic state has the responsibility to create the conditions that would make it possible.

However, in Quebec as elsewhere in the Western world, the place that should be given to a teaching on religions in the curriculum is still a very controversial issue. It is still too early to say what the response of the Quebec government will be to the recommendations of the Committee of Religious Affairs. As the advice of this Committee shows very clearly, the Quebec educational system is presently at a crucial juncture for the future of religion education in public schools. We must hope that the decisions which will be taken concerning the renewal of the derogatory clauses to the Charter of Rights will finally place that debate where it should be: on the pedagogical ground.

The recent (at the time of writing) electoral debate in the United States has shown that religion is still an important reality in 'post-modern' societies. More than ever, citizens must have learnt in school how to make sense of that reality in order to be prepared to live in today's and tomorrow's world.

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HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: SOME POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVES

Liam Gearon

Roehampton University, England

Introduction

Underpinning all conceptualisations of human rights in modern times is the founding Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) in 1948:

as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations; to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms (UN, 1948).

Decades later, Fukuyama's (1992) much discussed sound bite about 'the end of history' made claims that this ideal of how a society should operate was now genuinely accepted universally—liberal capitalism had 'won' the Cold War and liberal democracy based on a value system of shared human rights was now the unchallenged model for all societies. Yet the decade that followed Fukuyama's vast claims proved problematic and challenging for any notion of human rights as a universally accepted social and political reality.

Indeed, the horrors which followed in the 1990s—East Timor, Kosovo, Kuwait, Rwanda, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, and those beyond 11 September 2001—do seem to militate against Fukuyama's thesis. On the surface, Fukuyama's would seem an uncomfortable and even untenable position. Yet, as the history of human rights indicates, this benchmark arose not from any great moral certainty but because of the absence of such (Johnson & Symonides, 1999; Morsinky, 1999). In short, the post-Holocaust years had shaken the international community into constituting or legislating for an understanding of a common moral standard. And post-September 11, revival of an ancient notion of the 'clash of civilizations'

(Huntington, 1992) might seem to be confirmed. Today, especially with world conflicts fragmented into regional and local ethnic violence, the pragmatic need for this common moral framework remains as necessary as ever, however challenged are notions of universal virtue (Macintyre, 1985; 1988). Even a 'post-modern' thinker like Rorty (1989), arguing that there is no non-circular reason not to be cruel, agrees that to be cruel is the worst thing that one human being can do to another. Indeed, philosophers of education recognise that extremes of cruelty and violence are the main source for calls to a moral education from the general public (Haydon, 1999) and the avoidance of human cruelty remains a form of categorical imperative. Its violation, the occurrence of atrocity in war or peace, still has the power to shock, even if the worst excesses of cruelty and abuse sometimes induce a sense of powerlessness in the distant television observer (cf. Bourdieu, 1998, on television as media oppression). Even if there are issues with the idea of moral principles (Fish, 1999), there remains, then, in pragmatic terms, a consensus that this crowded earth needs a form of basic and legal norms to organise and guide its various and diverse communities. Based around the rule of international law and universal human rights, it is this supposed consensus that remains the source of contestation and conflict, against a historical backdrop where human rights discourse has been used and abused for the interests of nation states. Building on considerations from other published work in religious, citizenship and human rights education (Gearon, 2002; 2003a; 2003b; 2004), I present some outline considerations for religious education amidst this human rights culture in the United Kingdom (UK) and internationally.

A Human Rights and Religious Education: Outline Parameters

The best known aspects of human rights are those under the heading of the International Bill of Human Rights which includes the founding Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Langley, 1999). And there are a number of accessible, non-technical guides to human rights and the United Nations machinery that upholds human rights in international law (Forsythe, 2000; Robertson, 1997; Ryan, 2000), if fewer written principally for educators (Gearon, 2003a, cf. de Forest, 2004). In terms of the historical development of human rights in modern times, Wellman (1998) suggests a 'generational approach': a first generation of civil and political rights; a second generation of economic rights; and an emergent third generation of 'human solidarity' rights. But he argues too that the proliferation of rights is more often empty rhetoric rather than moral progress; and it is a thesis which the early years of the twenty-first century might seem to confirm.

Other critics (Chomsky, 2000; 2002; Mills, 1998) suggest human rights can be contested as cultural imperialism from New York and Geneva or as a form of new moral sovereignty imposed by the West. Not surprisingly, some non-Western societies, especially those organised around religious or ideological principles, agree

with such a view. Yet Fukuyama's end of history argument still holds: human rights, however contested, remain the international benchmark for behaviour in the world today, even if the world so often falls short of its own ideals. Thus, in 1993 the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna reviewed global progress on human rights. Five years later, on the fiftieth anniversary of the 1948 Declaration, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights presented a formal Report outlining key issues for the global community and in a grim concluding paragraph commented:

The international community must conclude that five years after Vienna, a wide gap continues to exist between the promise of human rights and their reality in the lives of people throughout the world. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, making all human rights a reality for all remains not only our fundamental challenge but our solemn responsibility (UN, 1998a, §104).

This significant distance between the utopian ideals of the global community and the dystopian realities that so many people in the world actually experience is arguably the key issue for discussions of human rights and human rights education today.

The historic landmark in UK law was the Human Rights Act (1998) which, from October 2000, brought into direct effect within UK law the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights (Leckie & Pickersgill 1999; for legislation affecting other continents see Forsythe, 2000). The Home Office (2000) rightly describes this as 'one of the most significant pieces of constitutional legislation enacted in the United Kingdom' and 'a key part of the Government's program to encourage a modern civic society where the rights and responsibilities of our citizens are clearly recognised and properly balanced'. It will, the Home Office suggests, have:

a vital role to play in building a new human rights culture for the UK, defining this culture as a 'modern society enriched by different cultures and faiths, given unity by a shared understanding of what is fundamentally right and wrong...where people understand that rights and duties are two sides of the same coin, recognise the duties citizens owe each other and the wider community, and are willing to fulfil them' (Home Office, 2000, pp. 1–2).

In these national and international contexts, education is regarded as a crucial context for the promotion of human rights. This was made explicit in some detail in the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action at the 1993 World Conference. The crucial point here is that education is seen as central in the development of an international human rights culture. The UN General Assembly continues, then, to be convinced of the importance of human rights education as a comprehensive, lifelong process integral to the promotion of human rights themselves, officially proclaiming 1995–2004 as the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (UN, 1998b, 1999).

Religious education has a particular potential to address and promote all 'generations' of human rights: civil and political; social, cultural and economic; and those related to human solidarity. In order to achieve this potential, however, religious education needs to take more account of the political implications of teaching and learning in the representation of religious traditions. Evidence of an international perspective on such issues has been led by Kung's work on a global ethic (Kung, 1995; Kung & Schmidt, 1998). Yet Kung's (1995) attempts to promulgate an authoritative platform for a global ethic through the 'Parliament' of the World's Religions, if well-intentioned, remain questionable. However maligned the UN and its achievements (Ryan, 2000), religious educators need to take more heed of the international, historically rooted and democratic processes integral to the development of universal human rights. Religious traditions are subject themselves to international law, and the tensions that such can create are as important from an educational perspective as the many instances where religious traditions can cohere with secular moral systems like universal human rights. It is important that religious communities as well as educators should not invest their own moral reflections with unfounded democratic status; and that they should take account of international legal frameworks. The relationships between traditional religious and moral codes and secular ones are too little explored in education, despite the fact that they can be the source of much tension.

So, in the United Kingdom at least, religious education remains, for all intents and purposes, almost entirely unengaged politically; or has done so at least until recently (cf. Gearon, 2001; 2004; Jackson, 2003; 2004; SHAP, 2003). Thus Michael Grimmitt's (2000) useful survey of pedagogies of religious education, for instance, presents the work of those who have been responsible for undertaking, with their colleagues, some of the most important and influential research and development in the UK during the last twenty five years. including, apart from Grimmitt himself, Alan Brown, Trevor Cooling, Clive and Jane Erricker, David Hay, Robert Jackson, and Andrew Wright. Here is not the place for detailed discussion of this significant pedagogical diversity but the risk of generalising is worth taking, especially if it will lead to further debate. There is a conspicuous absence of a political dimension to most of the approaches presented in the survey. So we have anthropological approaches which look at small scale societies from an ethnographic perspective but with less concern for macroeconomic and socio-political issues (Jackson, 2000). We have supposedly global approaches to tradition which neglect the imperialist missionary enterprises of the past (Brown, 2000). We have conceptual modes of religious development that fail to identify either the mechanism of political power or the imposed models of Western nationalism which lie behind so many cultural constructions (Cooling, 2000; Wright, 2000). This is certainly not an attempt to undermine these contributions to religious education theory or practice. Yet the absence of a significant political consciousness in these approaches to religious education is clear. One natural way to counteract this neglect, in terms of pedagogy, is by a heightened awareness of human rights education within the subject. This itself can be more fully developed as a rationale for citizenship education (Gearon, 2004).

For religious education, universal human rights become inevitably more important in a world where human rights increasingly become a dominant and cross-cultural legal discourse.

Human Rights and Religious Education: Some Post-colonial Perspectives

Where we begin is an uncomfortable starting place: we have to balance religious education's often overly utopian agenda with the often dystopian global realities. Such realities include especially human rights and their abuse; and in particular the part religions have played, and continue to play, in such abuse. Religious educators need to avoid, of course, a simplistic either/or thinking in relation to the historical political engagement of religious traditions—themselves often at the forefront of struggle for human rights and social justice. But the assessment of religious traditions in relation to universal human rights may lead to political critiques. Religions do retain an occasional, if marked, political ambivalence in relation to distant, recent and even contemporary, historical realities when it comes to universal rights. However, from the approaches to pedagogy outlined in Grimmitt (2000), it is quite apparent that religious education has lacked, and continues to lack, both the astute historical depth and the sense of political reality that would easily allow such a consideration. One of the reasons for this is that the subject, understandably, does not wish to cause offence when, amongst other virtues, it proclaims tolerance. What I want to do is present the case for taking more account of the most basic insights of post-colonial criticism as a means of clarifying inherent power relations within and between religions, states and cultures; and to do so through a focus on religious education in relation to human rights.

Yet, at least in the UK, it is precisely such political issues that are seemingly beyond the anodyne definitions of religion given by official bodies such as the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and in their Model Syllabuses for Religious Education, useful as these might be in broader and more simplistic terms (QCA, 1998a; 1998b). How were religious educators to find any guidance in a document uncritically written in collaboration with the Faith Communities' Working Groups (QCA, 1998c), on the critical (that is, often unpleasant) imperial histories and repressive present realities of religion? It is understandable that educators no longer impose the agenda entirely from outside the traditions, and no one wishes to give overt offence. But there must be some means of critical engagement with traditions as living historical entities. For all its attempts to embody individuals within historic tradition(s), Wright's (2000) otherwise excellent work on a proposed critical religious education remains without historical or political consciousness. The models of rationalism proposed by Wright not only are of a Western construction (no fault in itself) but have also too often been used to denigrate the non-Western 'other'. Later official documents do, however, seem to be giving more credence to post-September 11 realities, with references to human rights occurring more frequently (QCA, 2004).

If we are to have a critical consciousness in religious education it must be both historical and political. We cannot always try to seek unblemished religions or pure

traditions. Indeed good phenomenology (Smart, 1989) always tries to place religious culture in social and political context. So often, though, in religious education, the seemingly malfunctioning, impure manifestations of a religion are ignored or proclaimed as simply aberrations, false political representations, impure forms of this religion or cultural constructions. Yet, arguably, as the religion manifests itself, these are part of what the tradition is as a whole. We may extend this analysis by suggesting that while religion does have a positive political role in the promotion of human rights and indeed suffers at times because of this involvement—religions continue to suffer immense persecution for instance (Marshall, 2000)—religious traditions have also actually been a culpable force in the international denial of human rights, especially in the repression of women and indigenous peoples, a process particularly notable in the history of imperialism (Harlow & Carter, 1999; Hastings, 1999).

Ayton-Shenker's brief but important UN Report, *The Challenge of Human Rights Diversity*, sums up the contemporary potential for such conflict:

...[the] confluence of peoples and cultures is in an increasingly global, multi-cultural world brimming with tension, confusion and conflict in the process of readjustment to pluralism. There is an understandable urge to return to old traditional cultures, fundamental values, and the familiar~ seemingly secure of one's identity. Without a secure sense of identity amidst the turmoil people may resort to isolationism, ethnocentrism and intolerance (Ayton-Shenker, 1995, p. 1).

Ayton-Shenker argues that cultural relativism (the word fundamentalism is not used) is a potential threat to universal human rights, and states the UN position: that the rights of an individual state or tradition cannot override rights established by majority international consensus. She argues that this hard-won consensus is a legal safeguard, not the province of any particular region or set of cultural traditions:

...human rights facilitate respect for and protection of cultural diversity through the establishment of cultural rights embodied in instruments of human rights law. These include: the International Bill of Human Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; the Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice; the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based Religion or Belief; the Declaration on the Principles of International Cultural Co-Operation; the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Linguistic Minorities; the Declaration on the Right to Development; the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families; and the ILO Convention No. 169 on the Rights of Tribal Peoples (Ayton-Shenker, 1995, pp. 1–2).

Arguably, it is precisely because religions themselves are some of the worst offenders—historically through imperialism and today through anti-democratic forms of fundamentalism—that religious educators need to take seriously dystopian

global realities of which religions, and related issues of conflict over cultural identity, are a root cause (Gustafson & Juviler, 1999). Post-colonial criticism presents harsh claims about the long-term effects of imperialism and colonialism: states destabilised, economies defrauded, human rights abuses perpetrated, even institutionalised—long after decolonisation, decades after the historical facts of ‘independence’. Post-colonial analysis, far from uniform, has at least this as a common task: to examine critically, and to a greater or lesser extent challenge, those power structures that were and are present between states whose interaction historically involved a coloniser/colonised relationship. The economically privileged Western world does not fare well in this analysis. Key figures like Césaire (1997[1955]), Fanon (1967[1961]) and Said (1994, 1995[1979], 1997) have thus done much towards developing understanding of the cultural, economic and political interplay of power relations between peoples, societies and cultures. Elsewhere I have assessed these thinkers as indicative of a threefold development of postcolonial thinking (Gearon, 2001; also Gearon, 2000): first, the radical anti-colonial—and especially anti-European and anti-American—rhetoric of Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* from the 1950s; second, the radical nationalism of Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* from the 1960s; third, Said’s transnational post-colonial theory from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, from *Orientalism* to *Culture and imperialism*.

The specific place of religious rights in relation to human rights has also been emergent as a field of analysis in the past thirty years or so (Gearon, 2002). Here a key theological reflection, written from within a South African context but of much wider applicability, is Villa-Vincencio’s (1999) *A theology of reconstruction: Nation-Building and human rights*. Villa-Vincencio elucidates his review of harmful theological histories with a frighteningly abundant number of pertinent examples:

The history of Christian crusaders in the ‘old’ world, conquistadors in the ‘new’ and the sense of manifest destiny among North American settlers are different manifestations of a similar theologised mission of conquest. Each is closely related to a theology of empire or nation-building. In more recent times, the missionary arm of British imperialism came close to totally destroying the cultural and religious identity of millions of colonised people. Theological support for Hitler’s Third Reich contributed to the annihilation of six million Jews (Villa-Vincencio, 1999, p. 19).

It is precisely these sorts of realities with which religious education, in the UK at least, has never really come to terms. This may be because of the difficulty here of Britain’s facing its own imperial past when it wishes rightly to promote tolerance and understanding in an integrated multicultural present.

In terms of historical and political analysis, though, Fanon’s revolutionary stance is unambiguous:

The recession of yellow fever and the advance of evangelization form part of the sheet. But the triumphant communiqués from the missions are in fact a source of formation concerning the implantation of foreign influences in the

core people. I speak of the Christian religion. The Church in the colonies is the foreigner's Church. She does not call the native to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor. And as we know, in this matter many are called but few chosen (Fanon 1967[1961], pp. 31–32).

Fanon's call, like Césaire's, is a call to violent uprising at a time in the early 1960s of decolonisation and the re-assertion of national cultural identity. The issue of violence is so often treated in religious education through its dialectical antithesis, non-violence; in the colonial context this always means Mahatma Gandhi and, in civil rights terms, Martin Luther King. These are excellent case studies but they do not present the full picture: what, for instance, of violence (*vis-à-vis* Fanon; *vis-à-vis* the Middle East, *vis-à-vis* China-Tibet; *vis-à-vis* Iraq) perpetrated by religious traditions themselves (or the violence religious traditions suffer at the hands of anti-religious ideology)? Mission and evangelisation are still current today. These matters of conversion are not simply of historical interest: for the cultural force of divergent worldviews still clamour for voice and space and the ensuing conflicts so often have ramifications in the public world of politics brought to us now so immediately by 24–7 media.

Writing with a less revolutionary post-colonial agenda, Said (not without critics for this) moves beyond the narrow nationalisms of Césaire and Fanon to a more accommodating stance in which 'world institutions are seen as working together' (Said, 1994, p. 341). But it is a world in which imperialism has been transformed rather than eradicated, a world in which the new imperialisms are ever-manifest, often as inequalities of the power structure—political and theological, economic and cultural—which facilitated the abuse of human rights in the first place (Addo, 1999; Cahil, 1999). The Christian churches were integrally involved in the history of this imperialism. They remain actively involved with this broad understanding of human rights, and especially with the new forms of economic imperialism. (Atkin & Evans, 2000; Christian Education Movement[CEM], 2000; Clement, 1998; Hogan, 1998). As Said comments, imperialism 'did not end, did not suddenly become past', once the dismantling of the classical empires had begun:

Accumulation on a world scale; the world capitalist system; the development of underdevelopment; imperialism and dependency, or the structure of dependence; imperialism: the repertory is well known in economics, political science and sociology...(Said, 1994, pp. 341–342).

The precisely elaborated and reasoned curriculum agenda has yet to follow. The process has been accelerated in the UK with the introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject (Gearon, 2003b). Internationally religious education can be seen as being forced into consideration of events which show that religious traditions are not content to rest quietly in the privatised margins of power and that the rise of the public face of religion in modern/ postmodern times is now more than an intellectual curiosity (Gearon, 2002, 2004).

Conclusion

I have tried to raise questions for an enhanced political awareness for religious education through human rights as but *one* important aspect of historical and contemporary international relations. Arguably in the twenty-first century, religious education will only be able to fulfil a developed role, including a strong relationship with developing areas like citizenship, if it continually reminds itself of the political dimensions of religion and the necessity for religious education to contribute actively to a raising of political as well as religious consciousness. The best models for emulation in such a political religious education are those which look at the place of religion in the context of an international values consensus which, however imperfect in practice, has been agreed by democratic process. An excellent example of such is Paul Marshall's (2000) innovative and ambitious study of *Religious freedom in the world*—the right to religious freedom, for example, is still denied by many authoritarian regimes, some of whom profess religious ideals of equality and tolerance.

One of the unstated flaws of religious education is its overly ambitious aims—such have included the transformation of spiritual, moral, social and cultural consciousness (Copley, 1997, 2000). Where such laudable aims fail is in idealistically neglecting the harsh global, political, so often dystopian, realities. The political context for religious education is nowhere better set than within the context of post-colonial criticism. The challenge is for religious education to play its part in evaluating critically historical as well as new forms of imperialism and the denial of rights which such engender. As religious educators, we need here to take a hard look at religious traditions in order to examine honestly the clashes between their ideals and those reached by international democratic consensus; and the pronouncements of Kung (1995) and Kung and Schmidt (1998) are useful only if they are contextualised in the wider structure of international relations and relevant non-government organisations active in the field (Forsythe, 2000).

Just as religions themselves have always had prophetic traditions that have offered a voice for the voiceless, so an understanding of the involvement of these same traditions in dystopian political realities encourages a greater sense not only of ambivalence but also of urgency and relevance to religious education's fine utopian ideals.

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ETHNOGRAPHY, RELIGION AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Eleanor Nesbitt

Institute of Education, University of Warwick, England

Introduction

This chapter is based on the following principles: education entails providing a safe and stimulating environment as well as the teaching and the facilitation of learning within it and it involves not only the curriculum but also what is extracurricular. Consequently, intercultural education must encompass both, and it is certainly not restricted to particular subjects in the curriculum that might seem to be especially germane such as, in the United Kingdom (UK), religious education. Education that is intercultural enables all concerned—and certainly educators and students—to question stereotypes and so to think critically about the meaning of such terms as culture, religion, ethnicity and race. Intercultural education affirms human diversity and has as its goal greater communal harmony as well as individual enrichment.

The goal of moving towards greater communal harmony is grounded in the view that mutual respect, and indeed friendly, open-minded interest in others, are fostered by having a sound basis for understanding social diversity. Sensitively respectful open-mindedness to one's neighbours' assumptions, preoccupations and priorities is a prerequisite for insights which extend one's capacity for appreciating difference and so for forging friendships. Such a capacity is integral to individual enrichment. Another term for this socially-oriented expansion of personal horizons is education. In other words effective education ('leading out', as a glance at the Latin root reminds us) is inherently and necessarily intercultural.

The needs of an increasingly interconnected global society require that education should be intercultural in all schools in all societies, whether or not the school, its local community or the country to which these belong are generally regarded as culturally diverse. In any case even the most 'monocultural' of schools and localities is culturally diverse in terms of gender, generation, social class, interest groups, even if it is not ethnically or obviously diverse.

I shall briefly summarise the ‘Warwick studies’ before explaining how ‘ethnography’ and ‘religion’ are to be understood in the context of RE and culture. After that I shall suggest how insights arising from the Warwick studies can be applied to teacher training. Another Warwick publication elaborates this by exemplifying practical implications in the context of the school curriculum, ‘pastoral care’ and school ethos (Nesbitt, 2004, especially pp. 154–66).

The Warwick Studies

The ‘Warwick studies’ are a cluster of projects of varying scale. They consist of a series of externally funded projects which commenced in 1983, under the direction of Professor Robert Jackson, and also include pieces of research conducted at Masters and doctoral level by our graduate students.

For more information about the research projects of the 1980s and 1990s, which looked at the lives of young Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Jews and Muslims see Nesbitt (2001, 2004). For one of the more recent projects, concerned with the values education programme for mainstream schools that has been developed in association with a Hindu-related New Religious Movement, see Arweck and Nesbitt (2004).

Among the studies carried out by students at the University of Warwick is Sissel Østberg’s authoritative examination of the processes underway in the identity formation of young Norwegians of Pakistani Muslim family background (2000a, b, 2003). Recent doctoral research by Bill Gent examined the educational significance of the experience of young Muslims, in part of East London, in their Islamic supplementary classes (2006). These classes include both *madrasa* and *hifz* classes. In *madrasas* (or, more correctly, *maktabs*), which are attended by many Muslim children, pupils learn how to read the Qur’an in Arabic. *Hifz* students, a much smaller constituency, are committed to learning to recite the Qur’an in its entirety from memory. Gent investigated the complementary role of such classes in the wider ‘learning community’.

All these Warwick University-based studies, conducted over two decades, have been ethnographic.

Ethnography

Ethnography is literally, in its classical Greek roots, nation- (or people-) writing and it has come to have several related meanings in contemporary European languages. The term is used for a qualitative style of social research that relies mainly upon field studies. For these studies the principal tools are interviews and observation. Where possible the interviews are not rigidly structured but are flexible enough to allow the interviewee to share ideas and experiences in depth. The observation often involves the observer in sharing in the life of the community concerned.

To varying degrees the observer is a participant, and so it is not surprising that, increasingly, ethnographic researchers reflect upon the ways in which, as interviewers and participant observers, they influence the data that they collect. The

way in which a question is framed affects the type of responses that interviewees offer. What they say will also depend in part on how they perceive the interviewer in terms of gender, age, social standing, ethnic community and so on. The extent to which members of a community perceive the observer to be 'one of us' or 'different from us' affects their interactions, at least with the observer. Among the growing number of ethnographers who have published their musings on the complex inter-relationship between themselves and 'the field' are Lubna Nazir Chaudhry (1997), S. C. Heilman (1973, pp. ix-xiii), and Dhooleka S. Raj (2003 especially pp. 10-13). Searching reflection of this sort is essential to the researcher's reflexivity.

Ethnography as we know it today has developed from the forays of enquiring administrators in nineteenth-century colonial settings, and the investigations by Western anthropologists in (usually non-European) societies in the first half of the twentieth century. These studies involved longer journeys for the field worker than the University of Warwick studies have done, and a longer immersion in the field than some of the Warwick studies. Indeed, Martin Stringer (1999), in a study of Christian congregations in the UK, endorses the view that ethnography necessarily entails prolonged immersion in the community concerned. This is certainly the ideal, but my contention is that small-scale qualitative studies can also be accurately called ethnographic. Thus, small-scale studies (lasting perhaps one term), of the sort that our students at the University of Warwick conduct as part of their MA in Religious Education course, are ethnographic insofar as the students are trained in the practical and ethical issues and conduct their enquiries both reflectively and reflexively. Moreover, an ethnographic approach to life, whether as a student or an educationist or both, is possible by looking critically for one's own buried assumptions, while looking enquiringly at another person's (Nesbitt, 2004, especially pp. 5-7).

Intrinsic to this ongoing reflectiveness is what my colleague Robert Jackson terms an interpretive approach. Jackson has elucidated and developed this in many publications (notably 1997 and, more briefly, 2000), by discussing an anthropologically-based study of religions that encourages learners and teachers to make conscious connections. One set of connections links their own experiences and those of members of another group; the other set involves recognising the ways in which 'parts' (e.g. a denomination, a personal belief or a religious rite or a scripture) relate to the 'whole'—in this case a 'religion' or a 'faith tradition'.

Religion

Although this section's concern is 'culture', it is the overlapping—and similarly fuzzy, fluid—concept of 'religion' that is dominant in this chapter. 'Religion' and 'faith' are terms which are often used in English interchangeably, although the spectrum of meaning for one does not exactly match the spectrum of meaning for the other. By many religious educationists the longer terms 'faith tradition' and 'religious tradition' are used in preference to 'religion' in the hope that 'tradition' suggests something less bounded and reified. The Warwick studies have focused upon religion, in the sense of focusing on the experience of young people who

identify themselves by a religious label such as 'Hindu'. As members of particular faith communities (Sikhs, Hindus etc.) their religion was an aspect of their identity and culture which they readily voiced. Their family's first language and country of origin were other aspects, which they tended to conflate with their 'religion'. Thus some children regarded 'language' and 'religion' as equivalent terms and used, for example, 'Sikh' and 'Punjabi' or 'Hindu' and 'Gujarati' or 'Hindi' interchangeably. (Looked at from another angle, it is a contemporary Western tendency to disaggregate experience—and culture—artificially.) When one young person spoke of his religion as something which could not be changed in the same way as one could alter one's nationality and passport he probably spoke for many others.

Young people were selected for the purposes of the studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s young people were selected out of those who attended regular activities which were explicitly linked to a faith community. These activities included (for Christians) Sunday school, an institution now known by a variety of names, and for young Muslims supplementary classes for learning to read the Qur'an.

The Warwick studies' focus on 'religion' (rather than primarily on culture) went far beyond these activities and was, indeed, almost as wide as the young people's daily life. The studies recorded and reported aspects as diverse as their attendance at supplementary classes (held in community centres and places of worship) and celebrations in their Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh or Christian community, and their ideas about God and about what happens after one dies. They took into account, among other things, their participation in religious education lessons in their state schools, their assumptions about diet, and their experiences of racism.

The decision to investigate the experience of young people from the UK's 'principal religions', rather than from 'cultural groups', followed naturally from the fact that syllabuses for religious education in English and Welsh schools are based on the twin assumption that there are six 'world religions' and that these are distinct from each other. This framework for viewing society is now, arguably, further justified by the signs that religion is an increasingly evident form of self-identification. In the UK, government discourse and strategy have shown an upsurge of interest in faiths since 11 September 2001, and the Council of Europe has also been prompted to examine the relevance of religion for education (Council of Europe, 2004).

At the same time the Warwick studies' focus on 'religion' raises several issues. One objection to using religion as a basis for selection is that our young people did not include those who are unaligned with any religion and so answer 'I am nothing' to the question 'What is your religion?' (Rudge, 1998). In many schools in the UK, and in some other parts of Europe, such young people are in the majority.

A second problem is that of artificially 'isolating out a Hindu sample, rather than studying an existing social matrix' (Searle-Chatterjee, 2000, p. 503). It suggests a 'pre-existing identity'. This 'isolating out' is problematic both because it assumes that 'religion' and 'Hinduism' can be separated out from the rest of an individual's or a group's experience and also because it assumes that there is an unproblematic

boundary between religious constituencies. According to this argument we damage our understanding of society by defining and selecting out 'religion' and its assumed bearers.

Insights from the Warwick Studies

However, it was this very experience of examining the experience of young people, with whom contact had been made through their families' religious organisations, which undermined, and so challenged, any tendency that we might have initially had to conceptualise religions as homogeneous, bounded or discrete. Moreover, as the basis on which Jackson's interpretive approach was developed, these studies have provided tools which may be applied to more 'secular' communities and settings. The Warwick studies left no doubt that some of the imagined boundaries between, for example, 'Sikh' and 'Hindu' are arbitrary and porous, and that, whether pupils identify with a faith community or not, their values and attitudes (for example, on gender, diet or leisure) are formed to varying extents by influences via the media (for example, soap operas and popular music). Such influences override any imagined boundaries between individuals who identify themselves as 'Hindu' or 'Catholic', 'religious' or 'non-religious'. Nesbitt (2004, pp. 21–34) illustrates the cross-community interplay of factors regarding dietary attitudes and practices.

Diversity

What has also been clear, in study after study, is the diversity of individuals who might share the same religion-related designation. Among Hindus, for example, not only were there differences of gender, generation and personality but also of ethnicity (as Punjabis or Gujaratis, with mother-tongues, cuisine, devotional styles that belonged to specific regions of India) and of *sampradaya*. *Sampradaya* is sometimes translated as 'sect', a word, imbued with the history of European Christianity, which does not convey the sense of *sampradaya* as a succession of gurus and their devotees. Britain's Hindus include devotees of the living 'god-man' Sathya Sai Baba, of Swaminarayan and Pushtimarg (two specifically Gujarati *sampradayas*) as well as those influenced by the Arya Samaj (a predominantly Punjabi *sampradaya* with a rather Protestant resistance to worship focused upon images of deities) and many other teachings and groupings. Members of some faith communities (for example the Muslim families in Birmingham) presented their faith as an undivided unity, but diversity along lines such as ethnic background, *tariqa* (i.e. a Sufi order), and exposure to Western-style education provided clues to a divergence of assumptions and aspirations (see e.g. Smalley, 2002).

The Warwick research has also disclosed the fluidity and change underway among adherents to a particular faith. During the research period some Sikh families were strongly influenced by the political violence that beset Punjab in the 1980s and early 1990s (see McLeod, 1997). In the eight years between two phases of the study of

young Hindus, some reported movement from being non-vegetarian to vegetarian by themselves or by other family members (Nesbitt, 2004, pp. 21–34). Some young people from Christian families (which could be described as Evangelical and charismatic) described the changes associated with ‘asking Jesus into their lives’ or being ‘filled’ with the holy spirit (Nesbitt, 2004, pp. 35–49).

Challenging Boundaries

Evident too are overlaps between the assumptions and practices of Punjabis who identified themselves variously as Hindu and Sikh. The issues concerning the historical reasons for ‘religions’ (in this case ‘Hinduism’ and ‘Sikhism’) being defined in the way that they are can be explored elsewhere (Nesbitt, 2005; Oberoi, 1994). One overlap between supposedly separate communities concerned festivals. For example, not only Hindus but also many Sikhs celebrate Diwali, the autumn festival of light, and Raksha Bandhan, the festival in August when sisters honour their brothers by tying a special ornate thread round their wrist. Moreover, society as a whole, and above all most primary schools, ensure that children of all faith backgrounds and none are involved in preparation for Christmas and, to a lesser extent, Easter unless vigilantly non-Christian parents make a very definite stand. Young British Hindus and Sikhs whom I interviewed spoke of their enjoyment of Christmas meals and Christmas presents (Nesbitt, 2004, pp. 52–54).

Another overlap was the matter of caste, since in the UK young people from South Asian families belonging to the lowest castes suffer prejudice from Sikhs probably more often than from Hindus (Nesbitt, 2004, pp. 98–112). It should be explained that the ‘caste system’ is a social hierarchy that is rooted in the Hindu tradition, with which it is often identified, but that South Asians of other faith communities are also implicated in a number of ways. For example, in a particular part of India Muslims or Christians may be from families which are still associated with the ‘low’ caste to which their forbears belonged. Families that immigrated to the UK from Punjab (in North West India) identify with different religious labels. For a marriage to be arranged (or at least approved) by older members of a family frequently means not only that marriages should take place between coreligionists but also within the same hereditary community or caste. Not surprisingly, Punjabi families living in the UK may still feel and voice certain prejudices and preferences that are based upon their perceptions of another Punjabi’s caste. Children, with no first-hand experience of India, still use caste-based stereotypes which on occasion fuel incidents of playground name-calling.

Widespread media coverage, backed by the work of some scholars, pictures young people from ethnic and religious minorities as being torn between the two cultures that they attempt to straddle (e.g. Anwar, 1998; Ghuman, 1994). Without playing down the pain or the ingenuity of many individuals, the studies at Warwick have suggested a more complex scenario in which young people demonstrate their multiple cultural competence (Jackson & Nesbitt, 1993, see p. 75) and their integrated plural identity (Østberg, 2003, pp. 218ff).

Terms and Concepts

The Warwick studies also revealed that individuals from different faith backgrounds used certain apparently shared words and phrases differently from each other. One of these was 'God' and this is explored in Nesbitt (2004, pp. 66–80). The following quotation from an interview with a ten-year-old Sikh boy illustrates two issues. (It needs to be explained that in colloquial English in some parts of the UK 'ain't' is used in lieu of 'aren't'): 'Sikhs ain't allowed to smoke. Our Gods ain't smoking, that's why'. Here we find God in the plural, as commonly happened when Sikhs or Hindus were speaking. Speakers moved from the singular to the plural and back without any concern. The statement also shows how, as was the case with many Sikh interviewees, 'God' served for 'Guru', one of their ten historical spiritual masters. For both Hindus and Sikhs the word 'God' in fact covered a spectrum of meaning that overlapped with Judaeo-Christian understandings of God, but included, for example, living human 'incarnations' of God. Thus a Hindu might refer to Sathya Sai Baba or another living spiritual leader or guru as 'God'.

Similarly 'baptism', when used by Sikhs, referred to the rite more correctly known as *khande di pahul* or *amrit sanskar* i.e. initiation with the two edged sword (*khande*) or the holy water (*amrit*) life cycle rite (*sanskar*) (Nesbitt, 2004, pp. 66–80). Likewise, Sikhs used the word 'priest' for the *granthi*, the person who attends to and reads from the scriptures, regardless of the fact that the English word has, on the one hand, strongly Christian connotations of vocation and ordination (and a job-description that includes pastoral care for a flock), all of which are absent from the Sikh tradition and, on the other hand, the connotations of a hereditary priestly class (as in the Hindu tradition).

Thus fieldwork reveals ways in which minorities incorporate English words into their articulation of their faith, and (conversely) instances of English words that are gaining new areas of meaning. Clearly teachers need to be aware of the ways in which their own understanding and use of particular terms may differ from their students'. Words may be shared to a greater extent than meanings, and the very fact of sharing words obscures differences in understanding.

Culture and Choice

The Warwick studies also highlighted the need to question assumptions that are made, by teachers among others, about their pupils' cultures and choices. If we take a young person's diet—for example, a diet that excludes all meat or that excludes the flesh of particular animals—it is easy as educationists to talk about this in terms of that young person's 'culture', or we may use the words 'tradition' or 'religion'. If so, we are assuming that this is a collective matter, an example of an ethnic or religious minority conforming to its own customs. Alternatively, someone may use the language of 'choice' and 'decision' and so of 'agency' (James & Prout, 1997). In these terms young people decide what they will eat and the attitudes that they have towards eating some food and avoiding others are their individual preferences. Our four ethnographic studies of young Hindus showed a spectrum of

attitudes and practice and the inadequacy of using either the language of 'tradition' or of 'choice' or 'agency' (Nesbitt, 2004, pp. 81–97) These individuals' behaviour resulted from interacting factors and might differ in varying social contexts or at different stages in life. Several had moved from being non-vegetarian to being vegetarian, and—in some instances—had returned to eating meat, and their reasons were not all specifically Hindu or Indian. Our research endorses an understanding of culture as multiple, contextually informed decisions by individuals, rather than as either simply an individual's or a group's inheritance or as their new creation (Nesbitt, 1995).

Educational Insights from Supplementary Classes

In 2004 Gent reflected upon the challenges to educationists of values that underpin the Islamic supplementary classes which he has studied as an ethnographer. Rather than strengthening Western prejudice against Muslim practice, his data are an encouragement to European educationists to re-evaluate more positively the role of memorisation in mainstream schooling and the degree of agency exercised by young Muslims who opt for rigorous out-of-school application to learning to recite the Qur'an.

Gent's work will contribute to the small but growing body of research on supplementary classes—studies which not only raise issues for main stream educationists but also inform our understanding of minorities. Thus the Norwegian anthropologist, Nora Stene Preston's, work on the experience of young Coptic Christians in a London congregation discloses the reasons why a faith community may encourage the dominance of English over the first language (in this case Arabic) of the parents' generation (1998).

Teacher Training

It is important that trainees be made aware of insights from ethnographic study of faith communities. Through a critically receptive reading of the ethnographers' reports they can encounter the meanings of 'faith' and the nature of cultural change in a range of communities. In this way their first hand experience is deepened and extended. So, Marie Gillespie's empirical study of young Punjabis (mainly Sikhs) in West London detects interactions between their consumption of the popular media and their construction of who they are (1995). Meanwhile Kathleen Hall's Leeds-based ethnography sets young Sikhs' identity-formation in the multiple frames of national and local politics (2002). Both accounts challenge any teacher's tendency towards reifying (and freezing in a time warp) supposedly discrete 'faith communities'.

At the same time, the benefits of adopting an ethnographic approach more generally are relevant to educational practice. As such they need to be included in both initial teacher training and continuing professional development. Here, however, there is the problem of competition for trainees' and teachers' time from

the many other components of teacher training. In the UK, where both religious education and citizenship are statutory elements of the curriculum, one way forward is for a 'cascade' process, whereby trainees and participants in in-service training who specialise in these subjects are grounded in an ethnographic approach and encouraged to share this with colleagues. Thus, in primary schools, the co-ordinator of religious education has a responsibility for providing some in-service training for non-specialist colleagues whose timetable also includes religious education, and this facilitates the spread of information and ideas. However, the inspection- and assessment-driven character of primary and secondary education provides a continual challenge to this sort of dissemination.

From colleagues in Initial Teacher Education in the UK come practical suggestions for inducting trainees into an ethnographic approach. At Winchester University in the South of England Dr Anna King reports setting a group exercise when introducing trainees to my book (Nesbitt, 2004). In groups of four, the students questioned each other on subjects such as diet, marriage and God. From each group a respondent reported back, and the interviewees commented on how faithfully they felt that they had been represented. The class discussed the questions that had been chosen, the accuracy and sensitivity of the listening and the nature of reflexivity.

Trainees were both moved and intellectually stimulated (King, 2004, personal communication [email], February, 2005).

The ethnographic approach that I am advocating as a strand in training will involve, firstly, developing a deliberate stance of questioning what one takes for granted, while being open to others' assumptions. Often members of a majority community have particular difficulty in even identifying their assumptions about, for example, individual autonomy, gender roles or humour. Or, their acute awareness of a historical struggle, perhaps for female emancipation, may make it all the harder to enter imaginatively into the thought-world of, say, a recently arrived minority community whose attitudes and practices appear 'backward' and 'repressive'.

Secondly, an ethnographic approach will require that one subjects curriculum materials, whether published or home-made, to ongoing critical appraisal. Questions to ask will be: Do the text and the images reinforce particular stereotypes? Look for the portrayal of women, men, members of visibly different ethnic groups. Does the material generalise unnecessarily? Is it out of date? A recurrent instance in the UK is the depiction of Inuit (labelled as 'Eskimos') as living in igloos, hemispherical homes built of snow.

Thirdly, an ethnographic approach will become the basis of a style of pedagogy that encourages pupils to 'build bridges'. At the University of Warwick, closely related to the ethnographic studies, Jackson's interpretive approach was exemplified in curriculum books, the Warwick RE Project. Two examples provide the flavour. Pupils were helped to connect a Pentecostal child's experience of the Holy Spirit with the narrative of Pentecost in the Biblical book of the Acts of the Apostles (Everington, 1996, see p. 28). Later they were invited to make a connection between an important event in their own lives and the preparations that Paul, a Roman

Catholic boy, was making for his confirmation (Everington, 1996, see p. 32). This involves the pupils in acquiring the ethnographic skills of (a) reflecting on what they are learning about the young Pentecostal's or Roman Catholic's experience and concepts in the light of their own and (b) reflecting on their own experience and concepts in the light of the young Pentecostal's or Roman Catholic's. But this attention to 'bridging' between 'parts' and 'wholes' (and between different 'parts'—such as the child's experience and Jesus' first century followers' experience of the Holy Spirit) and between oneself and others should not be restricted to the study of religion.

Intercultural education requires its wider application. As stressed at the outset, the whole curriculum and indeed the school's ethos need to be planned to maximise their potential for intercultural education. For example, those with responsibility for school management will need to reconsider criteria for recruitment to teaching and auxiliary staff. Consideration of 'equal opportunities' and representation of minority or less privileged groups will also be necessary.

Conclusion

Religion's inseparability from culture, both historically and in the contemporary world, means that field studies of faith communities are relevant to resourcing intercultural education. In particular they provide insights into the plurality of individuals' identities. We risk forgetting the increasing cultural plurality of the individual, whether as a result of the influence of the media and of personal contacts, social mobility, intermarriage or spiritual questing (Nesbitt, 2003). As we have seen, education about diversity must not stop with an assumption of diverse societies that consist of fairly distinct, homogeneous 'communities', but must take account of individuals' capacity to integrate a variety of group identities (such as Pakistani, Muslim and Norwegian or Asian, British, Hindu and Scottish). Reflective practice requires educationists to consider their own plurality—perhaps as a politically liberal, non-religious, fair-complexioned person who is involved in particular types of sport, music or other leisure activities—and how personal plurality interacts with other people (who are themselves also plural) in a variety of contexts (for example, in school, in one's family, in one's preferred social setting).

Anyone seeking further assurance of ethnography's key role in education is commended to access the exposition by Francesca Gobbo of Turin University (2003). Any reader who is interested in exploring further the contribution that an ethnographic approach can make to intercultural education, or who wishes to gain a fuller picture of the Warwick studies, is recommended to look at Nesbitt (2004). The examples mentioned above of studies conducted in England (and Norway) are intended to illustrate the power of the particular individuals, groups and behaviour that one observes locally to challenge generalisations. Such examples also affirm and celebrate young people as agents rather than as passive receptacles of 'religion' or 'culture'.

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UNDERSTANDING RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN A PLURAL WORLD: THE INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

Robert Jackson

University of Warwick, UK

Introduction

The interpretive approach outlined in this chapter was originally developed for use in religious education (RE) in publicly funded community schools in England and Wales, where the subject is primarily concerned with helping pupils to gain a critical and reflective understanding of religions. The approach has subsequently been developed further in the UK, and has also been used in Norway, Germany, Canada and Japan as well as in a Council of Europe project on bringing the dimension of religious diversity to intercultural education across its 46 member states (e.g. Council of Europe, 2004, 2007). The approach forms the basis of the theoretical framework for pedagogical studies being conducted as part of a European Union Framework 6 research project on religious education by a consortium of ten European universities (Jackson, 2006; Jackson *et al.* 2007).

This chapter is concerned with describing the methodology of the approach, showing how it developed from ethnographic studies of children from religious groups (some of which are outlined by Eleanor Nesbitt in the previous chapter) and developed further through curriculum development and school-based action research. Though the approach draws on the social sciences, it does not reduce religious education to 'sociology', but provides rather a means to personal engagement with religious ways of life. However, it does bring from recent social science practical techniques for interpreting the worldviews of others, and a concern with issues of reflexivity. This last point is important, since arguments against drawing on pupils' own personal views in religious education (see the chapters by Grelle on the USA and by Estivalezes on France below, for example) tend to assume that this element is derived from religious or theological sources, rather than from social science disciplines such as recent social and cultural anthropology.

It should be noted that the interpretive approach does not claim to be a total method for the subject—it does not claim that all the processes of religious education rely on the social sciences—and it can be supplemented fruitfully by other methods and approaches e.g. philosophical, textual, artistic and historical. Those who have developed the approach have made use of such complementary methodologies.

The interpretive approach developed from three related strands of work at the University of Warwick. The first was a series of studies of individuals from various religious groups in Britain, with a concentration on studies of children and processes of transmitting religious culture. The second was a concern with issues of method in relation to practice and theory, which related both to the research studies in the field and to religious education in classrooms. These studies led to a critique of some of the ways in which religions have been portrayed and interpreted conventionally in the history of religions and in religious education. Questions derived from fieldwork, relating to the inner plurality of religions, to the personal yet group-oriented nature of religious expression and to the relationship between the researcher and the object of study, led to a synthesis of experience based on ethnographic studies and theory from a number of disciplines and fields in the social sciences and humanities. Recent debates in social anthropological theory, religious studies and cultural theory, for example, were reviewed in relation to methodological issues in ethnographic fieldwork and in religious education. The third was the development of an approach to religious education (which continues to be developed) in the light of all the above. Its initial development was partly through an experimental curriculum development project (the Warwick RE Project) and partly through on-going work in RE that draws on further field studies of various kinds and relevant theory. Work up to 1997 is reported in *Religious education: An interpretive approach* (Jackson, 1997). Further developments are reported in *Rethinking religious education and plurality: Issues in diversity and pedagogy* (Jackson, 2004a: see Chapters 6 and 7) and in *Education and religious diversity: The interpretive approach in an international context* (Jackson, forthcoming). Although the work was designed originally as a contribution to ‘secular’ religious education in publicly funded schools in England and Wales, it has been applied within faith-based education (e.g., Coleman, 2005) and it is applicable internationally both to religious education (or its variants) and to fields such as intercultural education, citizenship education, values education and social studies, which incorporate studies of religious diversity (Council of Europe, 2007; Jackson, 2003, Chapter 1; 2004a, Chapter 8; 2004b).

Developing the Approach

Ethnographic research specifically on children, and the development of curriculum material associated with it, began at the University of Warwick in the 1980s (e.g. Jackson & Nesbitt, 1986) and continued through the 1990s (e.g., Jackson, 1989; Jackson & Nesbitt, 1990; 1993; Nesbitt, 2004). The Warwick RE Project was the curriculum branch of a research project entitled ‘Ethnography and Religious Education’ funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC Project

Reference number R000232489). It is important to point out at the outset that the main pedagogical methods and principles associated with the project are not inextricably bound up with ethnography but are associated with theory from various sources in the humanities (e.g., philosophy and cultural history) and social sciences (especially social or cultural anthropology) and with methodology that is influenced by hermeneutics. The hermeneutical method is the key element, and it can be applied in the absence of ethnographic fieldwork.

The aims of the project included increasing knowledge and understanding of the 'transmission' of religious culture to children and young people within families of four religious traditions in Britain using ethnographic methods; developing a theoretical framework for transposing ethnographic sources from the project into religious education material; and developing books for teachers, drawing on the project's theoretical work in religious education. The first aim was achieved through a series of ethnographic studies of children from different religious backgrounds (See Nesbitt's chapter above and e.g., Nesbitt, 1995a and b; 2004, Chapters 3 and 5). The theoretical background to the project plus an account of wider possibilities for the approach (aim 2) were published as *Religious education: An interpretive approach* (Jackson, 1997), while the third aim was achieved through the publication of the Warwick RE Project. The theoretical work developed during the ESRC study raised issues of *representation, interpretation and reflexivity* (Jackson, 1997).

Representation

The approach is critical of Western, post-Enlightenment models of representing 'world religions' as schematic and homogeneous belief systems, whose essence can be expressed through a series of propositions or doctrinal statements (Said, 1978; 1993; Smith, 1978). The project does not abandon the use of the language of 'religions', but is critical of approaches which essentialise or stereotype them. The approach is equally critical of simplistic representations of cultures and of the religion/culture relationship. Recent debates in social/cultural anthropology and other social sciences are used to develop more sophisticated models of the representation of cultures, cultural processes and ethnicity (e.g., Barth, 1981; Baumann, 1996; Clifford, 1988; Eriksen, 1993; Geertz, 1973; Said, 1978). Cultures are presented as internally contested and fuzzy edged, while individuals are seen as capable of contributing to the reshaping of culture through making personal syntheses which might utilise various cultural resources, including their own ancestral traditions. Thus 'culture' is seen as both a possession and a process.

A model for representing religious material is developed which encourages an exploration of the relationship between individuals in the context of their religious and cultural groups (Tajfel, 1981) and to the wider religious tradition. The tradition is seen as a tentative but contested 'whole', and it is recognised that different insiders (and outsiders) might have varying understandings of the nature and scope of the Hindu or Christian traditions, for example. The model offers a view of religions which acknowledges their complexity and internal diversity, including their varying

interactions with ‘culture’. The personal element in religions is emphasised, with religion being presented as part of lived human experience. The approach is not relativistic in relation to truth, aiming for a procedural epistemological openness and acknowledging varying and often competing truth claims (e.g., Jackson 1997, see pp. 122–126).

Interpretation

In developing a methodology for interpretation, some of the claims of ‘classical’ phenomenology of religion as interpreted by some writers on religious education were rejected (Sharpe, 1975), especially the view that it is possible to put one’s presuppositions into ‘parentheses’ and that the use of empathy is straightforward. The interpretive methodology does have some elements in common with Jacques Waardenburg’s ‘new style’ phenomenology (Waardenburg, 1978), but it relates closely to work in recent interpretive anthropology. Rather than asking learners to leave their presuppositions to one side, the method requires a comparison and contrast between the learner’s concepts and those of people being studied. The approach requires a backwards and forwards movement between the learner’s and the other’s concepts and experiences. Sensitivity on the part of the student is regarded as a necessary condition, with empathy only being possible once the terms and symbols of the other’s discourse have been grasped.

The application of the model of representation outlined above requires moving back and forth between individuals in the context of their groups and the wider religious tradition. The work of the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (e.g., 1973; 1983) influences the method. However, some aspects of Geertz’s work are criticised, such as his lack of direct involvement of insiders in editorial roles and his sparing use of quotation from his interviewees—examples of Geertz’s lack of attention to issues of power (Clifford, 1988; Crapanzano, 1986).

As Wilna Meijer has pointed out, the approach is not only relevant to studies of contemporary religion; it can also be used ‘historically’, in revisiting lost or forgotten aspects of tradition and facilitating young people’s reappraisal of it. (Meijer, 2004). Her observation is consistent with the project’s approach to ‘edification’ (see below under reflexivity).

The interpretive methodology of the project was also influenced by the project team’s experience of ethnographic fieldwork (see Nesbitt, 2004 and Nesbitt’s chapter above). Studies of children from different religious backgrounds in Britain stimulated methodological reflection and were used as a primary source for curriculum development.

Reflexivity

A number of issues concerning reflexivity—understood here as the relationship between the experience of students and the experience of those whose way of life they are attempting to interpret—were raised by the project’s ethnographic

methodology and applied to religious education. Three aspects of reflexivity were identified as applicable to religious education. First, learners are encouraged to review their understanding of their *own* way of life (edification). Secondly, they are helped to make a constructive critique of the material studied at a distance; and thirdly, they are involved in reviewing their methods of study. Clearly, the more the teacher is aware of the religious and cultural backgrounds of students, the more sensitive and focused the teaching can be. This approach also requires methods that allow students to gain insight from their peers and to be able to examine different ideas of truth held within the classroom. The 'content' of RE is not simply material provided by the teacher, but includes the knowledge and experience of the participants and an interactive relationship between the two. Teachers working with children from diverse backgrounds need the skill to involve children directly in designing and evaluating methods of study.

Edification

One of the key aims of religious education, as understood in the English and Welsh curriculum, is to help pupils to reflect on their studies of ways of life that are different from their own in some ways. It is illuminating that anthropologists have written about how their studies of others have prompted some form of re-assessment of their understanding of their *own* ways of life (e.g. Leach, 1982, see p. 127). The term 'edification', adopted from the American philosopher Richard Rorty, was used to describe this form of learning (Rorty, 1980). This concept has some features in common with Michael Grimmitt's idea of 'learning from' religion but is not identical to it (see Grimmitt, 1987, p. 225; Jackson, 1997, see pp. 131–132).

This reflexive activity is not easy in practice to separate from the process of interpretation. Interpretation might start from the other's language and experience, then move to that of the student, and then move back and forth between the two. Thus the activity of grasping another's way of life is inseparable in practice from that of pondering on the issues and questions raised by it. Such reflexive activity is personal to the student and teachers cannot guarantee that it will happen. They can, however, ensure that such activity is not stifled and can provide structured opportunities for reflection. It is also the case that making this type of connection often helps to motivate students to participate more fully in RE. As Harold Loukes found in the 1960s (Loukes, 1961), and as Kevin O'Grady has demonstrated in his action research with secondary pupils in the north of England (O'Grady, 2005), a religious education disconnected from pupils' own questions and concerns is very likely to fail to engage and to motivate them. Whatever differences there might appear to be between the student's way of life and the way of life being studied, there may also be common features or points of contact or overlap. What might appear to be entirely 'other' might link with one's own experience in such a way that new perspectives are created or unquestioned presuppositions are challenged. Edification need not only result from studying religions or cultures other than one's own.

As Wilna Meijer has noted (see her chapter above), the study of *one's own* ancestral tradition, in religious or cultural terms, can also give new insights in re-examining one's sense of identity. The anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff demonstrates this very well in her study of elderly people in a Jewish community in the USA, showing how her academic studies re-awakened her own interest in questions of Jewish identity (Myerhoff, 1978). In the case of religious education, young people might see religions, including the one of their own history, from a new perspective. Ethnographic source material, plus data from locally conducted studies, could provide a basis for this, as could historical material (whether from local or wider sources).

Being edified by studying religious material does not imply *adopting* the beliefs of followers of that religion. It does imply recognition of the similarities and differences between all humans and of the inherent relationship between the identity of each person and the manifestation of differences. Moreover, it builds upon a genuinely positive attitude towards diversity, seeing the meeting between people with different beliefs and cultural practices as enriching for all, and seeing individual identity as being developed through meeting 'the other'. 'Recognition' in this sense can lead to a more positive approach to multi-cultural societies, both at the individual level and from the perspective of the state, leading to an active accommodation of differences, while upholding and strengthening shared values and a common human identity.

Constructive Criticism

Reflexivity involves being able to engage critically with material studied. The management of such critical work is a sensitive pedagogical issue, especially in pluralistic classrooms. Criticism can also be applied fruitfully to method. Just as researchers should spend time reflecting on the effectiveness and the ethics of the methods they have used, so a critique of the RE methods should be part of its content. This methodological self-awareness can reveal issues of representation and can also stimulate creative ideas for improvement, in the presentation of findings to others, for example. Methodological reflection can also help students to become more aware of bias in the techniques used in other forms of presentation. Once they have engaged in some methodological self-criticism they might better undertake a critique of the representation of Islam in popular newspapers, for example.

The Warwick RE Project

The first educational outputs using the interpretive approach were books for pupils and teachers, known collectively as the Warwick RE Project, and developed from ethnographic field data and theory. Project team members had various roles, with some members taking on more than one. These included supervising and conducting ethnographic research and curriculum development; contributing

theoretical and methodological ideas; arranging meetings to provide an on-going review of progress; and contributing to the project's writing programme. The main role of the ethnographers was to conduct field studies and disseminate findings. Ethnographers liaised with the curriculum developers providing them with field notes, audio-taped interviews and slides and introducing them to selected families in order to extend their involvement with the project. Ethnographers also provided background briefing material for use by curriculum developers in writing books for pupils or teachers' resource books. The curriculum developers were introduced to the project's methods and theory and to ethical issues such as confidentiality. The co-ordinator of curriculum development liaised with all participants, organising limited trials of material in schools (Everington, 1996a, b), and contributing to the project's writing programme (Everington, 1993a, b; Jackson, Barratt & Everington, 1994).

The project team aimed to find ways to connect the experience of children in communities with the practice of RE in schools. Our ideas and materials *could* have been developed for in-service training of teachers or for use in initial training. However, we eventually settled for a curriculum project. The key goal was to *experiment* with applying some of the theoretical ideas and some of the ethnographic data from our studies in books for children and young people, rather than giving comprehensive coverage to religions, which was not feasible given the project's budget and time scale. The following is a brief summary of the content and pedagogical approach of the texts written for pupils.

Pupils Aged 5–7 Years

For 5–7 year olds, each children's book focuses on a single child from one religious group. The stories of two Christian girls, a Jewish boy, a Muslim girl and a Buddhist boy are based on studies conducted by members of the project team, each illustrating how children learn through participation in religious activities within the family (Barratt, 1994a, b, c, d, e). There are two versions of each pupil text, one printed in the *Teacher's Resource Book* to be read by the teacher and used as a basis for discussion (Jackson, et al., 1994), and a simpler text to be read by pupils reproduced in the children's books. The process of interpretation is also introduced in the *Teacher's Resource Book* which helps children to relate concepts, feelings and attitudes encountered in the stories to their own language and experience. Terms, actions and objects identified from the pages of the story books are grouped under general headings as 'key ideas'. These general concepts suggest areas where bridges can be made from pupils' experience of life to the experience of the children introduced in the story.

'Edification' is introduced through raising questions in relation to the pupils' own experience. These explorations and discussions aim to broaden children's horizons and stimulate thought and reflection. The bridging discussions include ideas for encouraging children to make their own contributions spontaneously. Children are encouraged to explore their own ideas, emotions and attitudes, and

to recognise similarities and differences between their own experience and that of children in the stories.

Pupils Aged 7–11 Years

With 7–11 year old children, the focus is on several young people associated with various Christian membership groups, and the emphasis moves to learning and reflection in groups associated with the family's religious practice. The book for 7–9 year olds introduces children from Salvation Army and United Reformed Church backgrounds (Barratt & Price, 1996a). The discussions cover topics from ethnographic source material and include 'joining', 'learning', 'believing and worshipping', 'prayer and praise', 'the Bible', 'living as a Christian', 'sharing' and 'caring for others' (Barratt & Price, 1996b). In the book for 9–11 year olds, three children from families with different ethnic histories are introduced, from Roman Catholic, Baptist and Pentecostal backgrounds (Everington, 1996c). Readers encounter each young person taking part in activities within the family and in different parts of their church communities. The material is arranged under the headings 'learning', 'preparing', 'responsibilities' and 'traditions'. Extracts from interviews are combined with an author-narrated text, illustrated with original photographs. Links are made to other parts of the Christian tradition and the *Teacher's Resource Book* provides advice on method and offers information and activities for pupils, moving between the language and experience of the children portrayed in the text and those in the classroom (Everington, 1996d).

Pupils Aged 11–14 Years

For 11–14 year olds, the emphasis is on engaging with the comments and reflections of young people linked to various groups within the religions. Each book features four British teenagers, two girls and two boys. *Muslims* focuses on young Muslims with a Pakistani family ancestry (Mercier, 1996), *Christians* introduces young people with Church of England, Greek Orthodox, Quaker (Religious Society of Friends) and 'New' Church backgrounds (Robson, 1995), while *Hindus* introduces young people whose lives relate to various aspects of Hindu tradition and whose family ethnic background is Gujarati Indian (Wayne, Everington, Kadodwala & Nesbitt, 1996). As well as providing general information about the young people and their interests, each text concentrates on aspects of their religious life, and includes extracts from interviews with them and photographs taken during fieldwork. The books cover topics related to religious practice in contemporary Britain, all suggested by the material collected during fieldwork.

Pupils are provided with activities related to each unit of work. '*Making it clear*' tasks check that students are familiar with the basic facts and ideas featured in the unit. '*Working it out*' activities help students to relate material from one of the

three 'levels'—individual, membership group or tradition—to material drawn from another 'level' so that each sheds light upon the other. *'Building bridges'* activities ask students to draw from their own experience or ideas in order to interpret material presented. Students are asked to focus on personal knowledge and experience for comparison and contrast with material from the religious tradition. The familiar is used to make sense of, or to gain insights into, the unfamiliar.

'Thinking it through' activities encourage students to use material from a religious tradition as a stimulus to reflect upon matters of personal concern. As the teachers' notes state, the aim is 'to encourage students to examine or re-examine aspects of their own understanding in the light of questions, issues or experiences which are encountered in particular religious traditions, but which also have universal significance' (Wayne, et al., 1996, p. 4)

The books had a wide distribution and usage, and are now sold out. All who were involved in the Warwick RE Project probably had some mixed feelings about the books and about the labour intensive experience of producing them. However, a great deal was learned through the exercise, and the materials have been widely used.

Developments of the Interpretive Approach

The Warwick RE Project illustrates a particular application of the interpretive approach. Whereas its pedagogical method started from a consideration of individual young people portrayed in the curriculum texts in the context of their families and communities, the interpretive approach can start at any point on the hermeneutic circle.

Starting with Key Concepts

For example, instead of starting with portrayals of particular individuals, the approach can begin with an overview of a tradition dealing provisionally with some of its key concepts, followed by a consideration of specific examples of individual or group life. This approach was used in writing a book for teacher education students and teachers entitled *Approaches to Hinduism* (Jackson & Killingley, 1988). The book starts with an overview of the Hindu tradition, but the limitations of such summaries are pointed out to readers. A treatment of some specific elements from the tradition follows, using a series of case studies of individual Hindus based on ethnographic or biographical studies. The intention was that the introduction should make the case studies intelligible, while the case studies provided non-generalisable details of religious life. The latter point up the limitations of the overview and extend an understanding of the Hindu tradition. There is scope for further developments along these lines giving closer attention to issues of interpretation and reflexivity.

Starting with Students' Questions and Concerns

The approach can also start from the questions and concerns of students, move to individuals or groups within a tradition or to general ideas from a tradition, and then back again to the student. Two examples will be given here.

Case Study One: Buddhism in the Lower Secondary School

The first is a project conducted by Amy Whittall with lower secondary students from a school in Birmingham who had previously done very little on Buddhism (Whittall, 2005). All activities covered at least one of the elements of representation, interpretation and reflexivity. As students had little prior knowledge, they were encouraged to raise questions about Buddhism, and were given time to discuss these in groups and to explain why they were of interest. The groups focused on two questions they would like to address. They were then asked to record their tentative answers to the two questions drawing on any previous knowledge. The answers formed their hypothesis.

Students were then given time in lessons to decide how they would investigate the answers to their two questions. They were able to choose the methods used, the resources needed, the tasks for individual group members and the homework set. As part of the process, students were required to be involved in a dialogue with Buddhist sources. Some groups wrote to Buddhist communities and then analysed the replies in comparison with 'textbook answers'. Other groups spoke to Buddhist children in other year groups in the school. All groups were encouraged in each lesson to discuss their work with students who were investigating different aspects of Buddhism. This helped them to build up a bigger picture of the tradition into which their questions fitted as a part (i.e. *representation* and *interpretation*).

The reflexivity element was achieved when students wrote their final reports. They were asked to consider if they had learned anything about *their own* ideas from their studies and, in particular, whether they could see any connections between their own ideas and those of Buddhism. One student, for example, considered how the idea of *nirvana* in Buddhism and that of paradise in Islam appeared similar in some ways, but not others. Finally, students were encouraged to review their hypothesis. They were asked to analyse how accurate they had been in their initial ideas and to try to explain this. Had they, for example, drawn on knowledge about other faiths and applied this to Buddhism? Had they made correct or incorrect assumptions? The process enabled students to analyse how they had used their knowledge of religious diversity and applied this to one specific tradition.

Throughout this work, students were involved in a process of moving inside and outside of the religious tradition, making conceptual links and drawing on previous knowledge (*representation* and *interpretation*). Every individual was challenged at a level appropriate to them so that the work met the varying academic needs of the students. Students gained an emergent picture of the Buddhist tradition as well as engaging in a process of comparison between ideas from Buddhism and their own

ideas. Classroom work utilised the skills of analysis, reflection, and investigation and students showed increased motivation through their individualised learning and hermeneutical activities.

Case Study Two: Aspects of Islam

This example shows a development of the interpretive approach through the use of action research in a secondary school in Sheffield in the north of England (O'Grady, 2005). A group of 12–13 year old students worked together with Kevin O'Grady, a teacher/researcher, to plan and assess a topic on Islam. Meanwhile, the teacher/researcher also gathered data on factors in their motivation to learn. The school had almost no Muslim students despite its location in a large, culturally diverse city and the students had little prior knowledge of Islam. Before the teaching started students added their own questions to the pre-set school scheme of work and also wrote down their preferences for styles of learning.

The first few lessons were planned taking these ideas into account, and at two further points in the topic the consultation was repeated. Students additionally reflected on what they had learned from the lessons. The teacher/researcher kept his own log of observations throughout. Towards the end of the project the students were interviewed in small groups about the process as a whole. There was evidence that involving students as collaborative researchers and planners of work had increased their motivation.

The key concepts of the interpretive approach were used as follows. With regard to *representation*, students became aware that stereotypes of Islam, as found commonly in the media, for example, did not match the diversity of the religious lives of real people. In relation to *interpretation*, students learned how to compare and contrast Islamic concepts with ideas from their own experience, and explored some of these similarities and differences through drama. With regard to *reflexivity*, bringing students' own questions and ideas into a dialogue with the Islamic material prompted students to reflect on their own values and cultural assumptions, generating some genuine intercultural understanding. There was no face-to-face dialogue, since no Muslim students were present in the class, but there was still a 'dialogue with difference' that built self-awareness and cultural understanding, as the following example shows.

In a lesson about family life, the students formed drama groups and most prepared sketches about what they believed to be important in family life. One group researched Islamic beliefs about family life from a variety of texts and noted five key factors on a poster for display. Each sketch was performed and then discussed, and the students indicated points of contact with the poster about Islam. There was a discussion about extended families. Students shared their own experience of traditional working class patterns of extended families in the local area, and how they valued especially the care for the elderly that this provided. In comparing this with their earlier assertions about Muslims 'sticking together in large groups in one area', the students reappraised their view. Muslims became less exotic through

the experience of cultural comparison. Several interview responses illustrated the students' experience of increased self-understanding through the interpretation of Islam:

The link is because, when we learn about different religions, you find out who *you* are...whether you're Christian, or some people don't want to be different things...you find out who you are inside.

We learn about Muslim life, then about whether it relates to us, in our life.

In Islam, they have set rules, like you should always help your elders, and it's made people think that we should always help our parents, too.

Another key element of reflexivity in this example is the importance given to the students' own voices at the centre of enquiry. Other examples of developments and adaptations of the interpretive approach, and its application in an international context, are given in Jackson, forthcoming. An example of a dialogical approach, developed from the interpretive approach by Julia Ipgrave, is given in Jackson, 2004a, Chapter 7.

Teacher Training

There is no space here to deal in detail with issues of teacher training, but some general points can be made. Teachers using this approach could be from any religious background or none. However, in terms of attitude, a necessary condition would be sensitivity and a positive attitude towards difference and the ability not to impose particular views upon others. Clifford Geertz would expect a similar sensitivity and openness from a cultural anthropologist studying another cultural scene (Geertz, 1983). I have called this quality 'epistemological openness', allowing pupils to enter debates and enabling them to position *themselves* (Jackson, 2004a). This is not a relativist position and leaves questions of religious truth open to debate (Jackson, 1997, see pp. 122–126).

Teachers would also need to treat pupils as co-learners, and to give them some agency in selecting particular topics or designing and refining methods of study (see, the discussion of O'Grady's work in Jackson, 2004a, Chapter 6 and of Ipgrave's work in Jackson, 2004a, Chapter 7; see also Jackson, forthcoming).

Teachers would need some education in the study of religions that introduced them to the debates about the representation of religions in Western literature since the European Enlightenment. This would not need to be extensive, so long as it was on-going. Teachers would need to experiment with ways of representing religions that emphasised the personal elements in religion and challenged the idea of religions as homogeneous systems of belief. They would also need a similar flexibility in approaching debates about 'cultures', 'ethnic groups' and 'communities'. Access to some small scale, local ethnographic studies would be

an advantage (see, for example, some of the studies reported above by Nesbitt, and in Nesbitt (2004) and by Østberg in her chapter below) or to autobiographical accounts and personal stories from members of religious groups. The important point is to learn principles rather than seek mastery of large amounts of data in a short space of time. The approach lends itself to learning *with* students in a spirit of joint research. Some knowledge of the cultural and religious backgrounds of their classes would also enhance teachers' sensitivity.

Teachers would also need practice in comparing and contrasting their own concepts and past experiences with related but (often) different concepts and experiences found in concrete examples of religious practice. They would then need to practise this 'bridging' skill with pupils. To enhance the bridging process, teachers would need to work with pupils in identifying the issues that concern them. Teachers need to use their professional judgement in relation to particular classes and the social circumstances of the school in deciding whether to start with explorations of students' own concerns and values (see, for example, the discussion of Eriksson's work in Jackson, 2004a, Chapter 6) or with overt material from religious sources (as with the Warwick RE Project materials or with an overview of key concepts).

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined an interpretive approach to religious education, illustrating it specifically through the example of the Warwick RE Project, but also indicating wider applications of the approach. The approach sees religions as dynamic and changing, and as a series of relationships rather than rigid and homogeneous systems of belief. Understanding is increased through studying the cases of individuals, in the context of their religious and cultural groups, in relation to various constructions of the wider religious tradition. The approach also requires the student to use familiar or analogous concepts and experiences in a process of comparison and contrast between one's own worldview and that of others being studied. The source material for such studies can be of various kinds, but ethnographic studies that point up the complexity of religious and cultural interactions and challenge stereotypes are one particularly useful source.

The interpretive approach includes the possibility that students might have their own views deepened through the study of other positions, whether outside or related to their own traditions. It also offers opportunities for students to apply their critical faculties skilfully and sensitively to material studied and to engage in methodological self-criticism and creative approaches to presentation, using the arts for example. The approach also recognises that students' own experience can and should be part of the subject matter of religious education, and that there is the possibility of developing new ideas through the interaction of pupils from different backgrounds. Pedagogically, the more aware teachers are of beliefs and values embedded in the religious and cultural experience of students, the more they can take account of pupils' concerns and can provide teaching and learning situations which are designed to foster communication between students from different backgrounds.

The interpretive approach is inclusive of participants from different religious and non-religious backgrounds, providing the opportunity for different religious and cultural positions to be understood in a methodologically sound, self-critical and non-relativistic way. It also acknowledges the potentially transformative character of such studies, while equally recognising the limited and partial effect of schooling in the overall experience of the young. There is scope for developing the interpretive approach in different ways, starting at any point on the hermeneutic circle. In countries where there has been deep ethnic or religious division it might especially be appropriate to begin with students reflecting on their own traditions, presuppositions and attitudes towards others. There are also possibilities for developing the approach in relation to the interface between religion and other curriculum fields such as values education, citizenship education and intercultural education.

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DYNAMICS OF RELIGIOUS CULTURE: ETHOGENIC METHOD

Mary Elizabeth Moore

Candler School of Theology, Emory University, USA

Introduction

The study of religious cultures is always done with a purpose—to preserve or transform the cultures studied, to understand a misunderstood community, to address issues of particular concern to scholars or religious leaders, or to contribute to a body of research on a particular topic. What, then, is the purpose of the Ethogenic research introduced in this chapter? It can have any of the specific goals named above, but its underlying purpose is *to study the dynamics of religious formation and transformation, and patterns of educational and religious practice, in culturally diverse religious communities*. The concern is not so much with the qualities of a particular community at a moment in time, but with the processes by which communities construct, transmit, critique, recreate, and transform themselves and their members in relation to the larger world. The concern, further, is with diverse forms of culture—cultures shaped by ethnicity, age and generation, denomination, class, region and other cultural realities—and how these cultures teach, or shape and reshape human lives.

The purpose of this chapter is to explicate the Ethogenic method, providing conceptual rationale and methodological detail to guide future work. In twenty years of collaboration with others, I have studied religious life and education in ethnically diverse parishes and congregations, seeking to understand processes of formation and transformation, dynamics of religious culture, and future possibilities for religious and educational action. More particularly, I have used the method to study youth ministry in diverse Christian communities, changing functions of Sunday schools, urban ministries, and educational processes within congregations struggling with controversial decisions. Studies thus far include eight congregations of six ethnic groups in the United States and one in Africa; the eight also represent five Protestant and Roman Catholic denominations and traditions (Moore, 1993; 1998a; 1998b; 2001; 2003; 2004; Moore & Moore, 1993).

This research is challenging because religious communities are changing bodies, shaped and reshaped by cultural interactions within and beyond themselves. Some early research has simplified this task of cultural study by focusing on types and qualities of culture, or influences upon culture. Our Ethogenic studies add distinct contributions to this research. First, they contribute an emphasis on social interaction and movement to previous research on religious communities. Second, they contribute social complexity to studies of faith formation, countering individualistic and universal assumptions about developmental structures, community life, and moral principles, whether principles of justice or care. Our work focuses more on cultural particularities, recognising that some qualities are common to many cultures and some are not. Third, this research contributes to understanding and developing educational and religious practice within complex cultural and multi-cultural matrices. Such work is sorely needed, for cultural analysis of religion has grown slowly in the United States. In religious education, the movement toward analysing religious communities and schools has been especially slow, even when general educational literature on diversity was burgeoning (Armstrong & Barton, 1999; Banks, 1997; 2002; 2004; Banks & Banks, 1995; Beauboeuf-Lafontant & Augustine, 1996; Bowers & Flinders, 1990; Cajete, 1994; Gardner, 1993; 1999; Gay, 2000; Goldberg, 1994; hooks, 1989, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 1987; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995; Woyshner & Gelfond, 1997; Young, 1990).

A fourth contribution of Ethogenic research is to generate further research. Our early studies need to be replicated and expanded. They also need to be compared with other religious education research, much of which focuses on *diversity* in relation to social and religious patterns (Andree, Bakker, & Schreiner, 1997; Conde-Frazier, Kang, & Parrett, 2004; Foster, 1997; Foster & Brelsford, 1996; Heimbrock, Scheilke, & Schreiner, 2001; Hobson & Edwards, 1999; Jackson, 1997; 2002; 2004; Moore, 2001; 2003; Wright, 2004). Other comparative research needs to focus on *particular* religious and cultural communities (Boys, 2000; Hess, 1997; David Ng, 1996; Donald Ng, 1988; Østberg, 2002; Schuster, 2003; Wimberly & Parker, 2002). These bodies of work, enhanced by Ethogenic research, can contribute to richer religious and educational life, enhancing cultural sensitivity and intercultural, inter-religious understanding and practice.

Assumptions

In the light of earlier research, the challenge now is to deepen public understanding of cultural formation, entanglement, conflict, critique, and transformation. This requires honest exploration of culture, and the recognition that researchers are not clean slates as they enter cultural study. They bring assumptions grounded in their contexts and theoretical pre-judgments. Honesty about assumptions helps people hold diverse agenda together, discouraging hegemonic cultural claims and opening paths for more adequate research and deeper human understanding. It opens space for diverse researchers to influence one another in shaping religious and educational

practice. Further, honest discourse counteracts tendencies to isolate cultural diversity research into a few ethnic and interest groups, obscuring its relevance to religious education at large. I have framed the following assumptions in relation to faith communities, the focus of our research to date; however, the assumptions also apply to studies of schools and other communities.

The first assumption is that faith is understood and formed differently in diverse religious traditions, and even in diverse communities of one tradition. Such differences are often foundational, not merely superficial. Even if people worldwide have similar cognitive structures (sometimes assumed by psychologists and anthropologists), one can find what Victor Turner (1974) calls 'wide diversities of cultural experience' (p. 3). The assumption of diversity seems obvious, but many efforts to regularise public religious practice, or Christian practice across a denomination, reveal hegemonic assumptions. Many religious leaders develop theories about how faith is formed and apply these theories in every situation. The result is inadequate—an application of one educational approach across quite diverse communities.

A second assumption is that differences among faith communities are as important to designing education as any generalisable features that may exist. Differences can be gifts to the broader human community, such as the emphasis in many Native American communities on revering creation, or in African-American communities on liberation. Such gifts are not cultural curiosities; neither are they the same in every community, not even in every Native and African-American community. They do reveal critical parts of the human story, however. Cross-cultural sharing reveals these gifts and their nuances, sometimes even helping people discover similar gifts within themselves. Native American reverence for creation often inspires reverence in others; Black stories of deliverance encourage others to persist in social critique and hope.

The point of view offered in this chapter is that human nature is pluralistic. We are not all of one kind, but we do have connections with one another so that one person or culture can influence others. This idea corresponds with Raimundo Panikkar's (1982) analysis of the archetype of the monk, or the human quality of monkness. This human quality may be found in many people, but it takes vivid and concrete form in monastic religious communities. Monks who live in these communities embody the quality of monkness, thereby awakening these qualities in others. Monks are not archetypes to be imitated, but they reveal the archetype of monk and call it forth from others. Might we similarly refer to archetypes of earth-relatedness and liberation-seeking? While Ethogenic research is not aimed at identifying or arguing for archetypes, the spirit of this question suggests an important perspective on human differences and similarities. To tap cultural uniqueness, both on the surface and deeply embedded, education needs many forms—forms that address people in their uniqueness and enable them to address one another.

The third assumption is that faith communities are complexly related to religion and culture. Much work in modern religious education has focused on the unique lives of individuals, but studying communities uncovers larger social patterns. Such patterns are embedded in a community's life, where beliefs, values and

practices form a kaleidoscope of colour. No shape or colour can be removed without distorting the larger picture. Communities are multi-faceted; consistent with Victor Turner's (1974) description of human imaginative and emotional life as 'always and everywhere rich and complex' (p. 3; cf: Ammerman, 1997). Indeed, this complexity interplays with the entire social fabric, a fact often ignored by religionists and anthropologists. Victor Turner, for example, had no early interest in religion. Then he realised that he could not understand a culture without its religious ritual: 'Eventually, I was forced to recognise that if I wanted to know what even a segment of Ndembu culture was really about, I would have to overcome my prejudice against ritual and start to investigate it' (Turner, 1974, p. 7).

Culture also influences religious life; thus, one cannot understand a community's religious life or religious education without understanding the broader culture, including the structures, interaction patterns, shifting movements, and values of a society. Again, Turner (1974) discovered such connections among the Ndembu people of north-western Zambia (Central Africa), for Ndembu rituals were performed in relation to social crises (see p. 10). The *Isoma* ritual, for example, was to help a woman with a history of miscarriages and stillbirths to bear children. Because childbirth problems were attributed to the woman's failure to honour her deceased mother or maternal, female ancestors, the problem was understood communally; the woman had violated the social order. Rituals were performed to help the woman *and* to restore social relationships (see pp. 11–13).

Another example of the social dimensions of ritual is the Ndembu twinship ritual, or *Wubwang'u*. Because procreation was valued in Ndembu society, twins were seen as a blessing, but milk and food were not abundant, so twins were also seen as a curse. The community, with its responsibilities for childcare, shared the blessing and misfortune. The *Wubwang'u* ritual thus charged the community in its role (see pp. 40–45). In so doing, the ritual acknowledged the blessing-curser contradiction and other contradictions in Ndembu life, such as male and female, matrilineal descent and patrilineal living patterns, sterility and fruitfulness, and sexual disordering forces and social order (see pp. 78–79). These examples reveal the rich textures of a community's life and its complex relationship with religious and cultural values.

The fourth assumption is that human beings are interconnected, mutually influential with one another and their common physical environment. Much work on education and faith formation has heretofore focused on universal qualities and processes in individuals. This is particularly true in moral and faith development research and, to some extent, in writings on spiritual formation. Similarly, many psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists have based their theoretical systems on universalist assumptions. Consider, for example, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Talcott Parsons, Claude Levi-Strauss, and Mircea Eliade. Particularly influential in religious communities have been the moral development theories of Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan and the faith development theory of James Fowler. My purpose, with the Ethogenic method, is not to assume, discover, or prove the existence of universal principles and cognitive structures. The assumption, rather,

is that cultures and individuals are part of a human community linked in visible and invisible ways, thus creating mutual influence.

To claim universal patterns or structures is misleading. It can be useful to explain why people in diverse cultures are similar, as in patterns of parental love or patterns of human growth from childhood to adulthood. The problem is that universal patterns are inevitably superimposed on all experience, and deviations are regarded as exceptions or, worse, aberrations. A more fruitful approach to human commonalities is to recognise interconnections in the human family—through procreation, migration, cultural exchange, and the sharing of similar physical qualities and a common earth. Such interconnections account for common patterns and structures without reference to universals. Indeed, the patterns and structures are often generalisable because people influence one another through historical and spatial relationships. Human commonalities are thus explained, not by eternal givens, but by the influence of dynamic, interactive relationships.

Ethogenic Method: Listening to Stories

In the Ethogenic method, the goal is to attend to a community's story—the complexities of its everyday life, revealing a dynamic interplay of beliefs, values, and practices. This involves close listening and observation of community life. The method is shaped by ethnographers' participant observation and the Ethogenic method of Rom Harré and his colleagues. In participant observation, the basic ethnographic tool of anthropologists, researchers engage in the life of a community over time, carefully describing what they see and hear. During this period of research, they generally avoid roles and relationships that impede their ability to observe community life in its fullness. Robert Bogdan (1972) defines participant observation phenomenologically as: 'research characterised by a prolonged period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects, in the milieu of the latter, during which time data, in the form of field notes, are unobtrusively and systematically collected' (p. 3). Our research has been engaged in such intense, prolonged interaction in congregational settings, using field notes to gather observations. Further, the research involves checking and discussing our findings with communities that are studied, thus following the reciprocal ethnography of Elaine Lawless (1994) and seeking the mutual influence and empowerment that she describes (1994; 2001).

The research is also Ethogenic. Rom Harré and others developed the Ethogenic method as an alternative to positivist research in the social sciences (Harré, 1976; 1979; Harré & Langenhove, 1999; Harré & Moghaddam, 2003; Harré & Secord, 1972; Smith, Harré, & Langenhove, 1995). Harré, a philosopher of the social sciences at Oxford University, was critical of the artificiality, supposed objectivity, and limited scope of much research in psychology and sociology. In response, he developed a research method based on the naturalistic observation approach of Niko Tinbergen (1972) and Konrad Z. Lorenz (1981; Lorenz & Leyhausen, 1973). Tinbergen and Lorenz studied animals in their natural settings

(ethology), observing, describing, analysing and explaining their behaviour. Harré and others developed similar research with humans, observing people in the natural complexity of daily life situations. In addition, the Ethogenic method includes listening to people explain their behaviour, drawing upon the linguistic capacity of humans to explicate the origins and reasons for their actions. Researchers assume that 'some insights into the genesis of that behaviour can be obtained by studying the accounts that are given by the actors themselves' (Harré & Secord, 1972, p. 152).

Note that the emphasis of Ethogenic method is to discover influences and origins of social behaviour and to understand the dynamics of social interaction, more than to graph the life of a people. The method thus fits within the genre of ethnography that focuses on dynamic social interaction. This is a subtle point. Although all ethnographers care about social dynamics, some who study religious communities have sought primarily to identify and essentialise enduring patterns of community life, rather than to study complex interactions and transformations over time.

Our research is described here as Ethogenic (in the family of ethnography) because researchers focus on complexities, interactions, and transformations. The approach includes observing a community's internal interactions and its interactions with the larger society, the earth, and the Holy. It also includes gathering accounts from individuals and groups in the community, listening to their different perspectives on community life. These accounts are gathered in various ways, including formal interviews, observations, questionnaires, and informal conversations. Then, a team negotiates the complexities and differences to discover the community's story, with all of its diversity. Many participants offer these accounts and a few community representatives help negotiate the accounts into a whole. The Ethogenic approach can thus be described as: narrative, inter-subjective, flexible and open, unobtrusive, and self-conscious.

Narrative

The emphasis of our Ethogenic research is on listening to and observing people's stories, inviting the community to be storyteller and teacher. The research team spends time in many aspects of community life, interviewing and observing as stories unfold. After each interview or observation period, the researcher records visual observations and verbal exchanges as thoroughly as possible. We use a tape recorder when we can do so without disrupting natural interactions.

Three aspects of this narrative approach receive particular attention. One is gathering stories from many people—young and old, females and males, leaders and followers, individuals and small groups. A second aspect is observing multiple stories of community life—social interactions, symbols and liturgies, community action. A third aspect is weaving the several stories into one communal story. In so doing, researchers assume that all the accounts are true accounts, representing some part of the community's experience or interpretation. Rather than searching for the *real* story behind so-called distorted accounts, we search for a communal story that represents collective truth, including diverse, sometimes conflicting, experiences and perspectives. For these reasons, representatives of each community help

negotiate the overarching story before public sharing. The negotiating process is an effort to bring mounds of data into a truth-telling narrative, but not a homogenised one. The community's story is intended to be a picture of the whole, including disputations. Further, we involve diverse people in this negotiation process to avoid domination by one person or group. Even so, the final story will only be an approximate picture of the community's life at a moment in time, inevitably influenced by the community observed, researchers, and negotiators. When our research team analyses the 'final' narratives, we recognise these ambiguities.

Inter-Subjective

Another quality of the research is inter-subjectivity. As stated above, the effort is not to find an objective truth behind a collection of subjective stories. The attempt is rather to view every situation and person as a subject with a story to tell. Every account offers meaningful perspectives on a community's life, though individuals construct their accounts according to their unique filters, needs and desires. Because the view of each person reflects his or her experience and understanding of reality, each story must be woven into the community's story. Researchers attend to these various accounts, knowing that no one perspective will be true and others false. An actual event is only accessible through multiple subjective accounts, which are negotiated to yield a more adequate community account (Harré, 1976; 1986; Harré & Moghaddam, 2003; Harré & Secord, 1972; cf. Josselson & Lieblich, 1995; 1996).

To gather these several accounts, the research method includes collecting life history material from several members of a congregation. Robert Bogdan (1972) recognises that the value of life history is to reflect a person's view of the world and of his or her life. This is the principal interest of a participant observer (see p.69), as it is of an oral historian (Gluck & Patai, 1991; Ritchie, 2003). Each person, according to Bogdan, has a unique career, including social roles and definitions of self and world. The person will therefore interpret community life both through the community's collective experience and through his or her unique career and individualised meanings. The negotiation of many meanings will give a fuller picture of the whole.

These ideas are compatible with the symbolic interaction school in the social sciences that has influenced Ethnogenic theorists, such as Harré, and phenomenological ethnographers, such as Bogdan. In both methods, attention is given to the interpretive processes that people use to describe and explain events. Since all concrete experience is filtered through an interpretive process, the interpretations or meanings that people give to a situation give access to that situation, though inevitably an incomplete access.

To be inter-subjective, our research teams listen to many different individuals and groups in a congregation. They also listen to one another, working in multicultural and religiously diverse teams. Collaboration minimises the tendency to shape observations and analysis according to the visions and biases of one scholar.

Though one author often serves as the primary analyst and writer of a community's story, that person regularly tests findings and narratives with the research team and members of the community.

Flexible and Open

To say that the Ethogenic research method is flexible and open sounds somewhat vague, for no research is completely inflexible and closed. In fact, the purpose of research is to make new discoveries, which means that research is by definition open to new knowledge. What is important to our Ethogenic research is that the research design itself is flexible, and is sometimes changed in the process of doing a study. Indeed, this is characteristic of participant observation research in which situations are allowed to guide research method (Bogdan, 1972, see pp. 18–19; cf. Bogdan & Bicklen, 1982; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). In our research, we develop a detailed research design in advance, but make changes as situations shift. For example, interviews are oriented around pre-established questions, but an interviewer may change the questions or simply listen when an interviewee seems eager to share something else.

Another example of flexibility and openness is the conscious effort of our research teams to postpone hypothesising about religion, education, and culture. This clears space to generate hypotheses and theoretical models in the field and to discover variations in community life (Bogdan, 1972; Taylor, Bogdan, & Lutfiyya, 1995). The intention is to suspend pre-conceived beliefs and categories as much as possible, and to be as open as possible to new ideas and categories as they emerge. Although the research does not begin with theories and hypotheses, it does begin by asking researchers to identify pre-conceived beliefs and attitudes regarding the subject and subjects under study. It also includes periodic checks when researchers identify and record their emerging perspectives and hypotheses. In these ways, we seek to be conscious of values, prejudices, and prejudgments, and eventually to analyse them, but not to be led by them into premature theory building.

Unobtrusive

The fourth quality of this research method is unobtrusiveness. As researchers, we participate in natural ways within each community, getting acquainted with people without calling unnecessary attention to ourselves. Following common guidelines for participant observation, we relate with many persons and groups, rather than identify with select groups. We usually avoid designated roles and responsibilities in the communities as well. The temptation to develop personal relationships or influence congregational life does arise, especially for a team of researchers who are teachers and ministers. We seek, however, to 'fit comfortably into the setting' and establish rapport without interfering with our primary function as observers (Bogdan, 1972; Bogdan & Bicklen, 1982; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). In the rare cases when a researcher has had roles in a community (such as interim pastor), we reflect on these roles in our analysis. The primary research purpose is to observe and

learn from, not to shape, these congregations. Although we know our presence will have some shaping influence, the intention is to keep our influence to a minimum during times of data collection.

Self-Conscious

No research method is devoid of researcher bias, for people have expectations about what they will discover, as well as preconceived ideas and categories. Further, their participation inevitably affects the situation and their observations of it. Thus, our method provides two ways to heighten self-consciousness. First, we follow the standard participant observation technique of recording observers' comments in field notes, bracketed and designated with [OC: ...]. This allows us to acknowledge reactions, responses and hypotheses for the sake of honesty and also for later exploration and testing. After all, the researcher is part of the situation and needs to observe herself or himself as well as others. Sometimes one's own reactions lead to insight into the situation. Second, we work in a research team, which includes a time to identify preconceived beliefs, as described above. We continue this process periodically during and after data collection in each community. We ask one another what beliefs we have about religion, education, and the ethnic group(s) we are studying, as well as what hypotheses are emerging. We record these conversations in field notes, both to heighten self-consciousness and to be a part of the data that we later analyse.

In sum, the basic research method is characterised by narrativity, intersubjectivity, flexibility and openness, unobtrusiveness, and self-consciousness. These guide the specific methodological steps to which we now turn.

Gathering Many Stories Into One

The method is divided into six phases—preparation, story collecting, analysis, storytelling, interpretation and theory building, and proposals for practice. The purpose of the preparation phase is to form a research plan with a selected community(ies) and to prepare the research team with background on the ethnic group and research method. The purpose of the story collecting phase is to listen, watch and record. In the analytic phase, we seek and interpret patterns in the collected stories, and, in the storytelling phase, we gather the many stories and analytic discoveries into one collective story. The fifth phase—interpretation and theory building—is designed to contribute to theological, social scientific, and educational theory. The concluding phase—proposals for practice—is a movement back into practice at the conclusion of analysis and interpretation.

Preparation

The first part of preparation is the practical process of arranging the research with a community. This involves: (1) contacting the community through a pastor or major leader; (2) presenting the project and requesting permission from the community

or administrative body, using consent forms for individuals and for the community as a whole; (3) collecting written documents (such as congregational histories, newsletters, service bulletins, and annual reports); and (4) collecting information about upcoming events and people to interview, as well as suggestions for what to include in the study. In these early contacts, researchers record field notes, which become part of the data. The second part of preparation is for the research team. This includes gathering socio-historical background of the cultural group(s) being studied (through selecting readings related to the subject of research); training in the research method; and reflection on pre-conceived ideas and hypotheses (discussed above).

Story Collecting

Preparation leads into story collecting—listening, watching, recording. Several methods are employed here, the order being adjusted for the congregation's convenience. The research team does seek to complete several observations in the community before beginning the interviews, thus becoming familiar with and to the community.

One method is to do field observations in community life, especially in worship, study and fellowship gatherings, business meetings, and settings suggested by community members. Field notes include attention to the building and grounds, symbols, use of space, and special places. Observations are also made of the patterns of relationship during these gatherings, during informal times, and in diverse locations and contexts.

In observing community rituals, researchers have several questions in mind: what are the ritual events, when and where do they take place, who is involved with what roles, what emotions are displayed, what symbols are used, and how do participants interpret them. These questions are consistent with concerns of Turner (1974), especially in regard to the dual importance of observing and translating rituals. Turner tried, for example, 'to discover 'the Ndembu inside view', how the Ndembu themselves felt and thought about their rituals' (p. 11, cf. 15). Exegeting rituals with community members can uncover subtle meanings that observers easily miss. Our research team seeks to get inside views of communal rituals and practices, even familiar ones.

In addition to observations, we conduct several interviews. One interview is with an administrative body, focusing on the community's mission, strengths, central values, needs, and hopes for the future. We also interview an education committee, inquiring about educational purposes, areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, understandings of faith, and approaches to faith formation. Finally, we interview a group of staff and lay leaders, preferably after participating in a staff meeting as a quiet observer. The questions for this group include: demographic data (gender, age, social class, occupations and education levels); significant events in the congregation's history and in the larger community (collected on a timeline); significant places, symbols, and stories of the congregation; descriptions of the congregation's

beliefs, values, and practices; and the leaders' roles. Other sources of demographic and historical data are also used (such as annual reports), but a leadership team is usually a reliable source for general data for faith communities smaller than 400 members (Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 1986).

Adding to the group interviews, we conduct individual interviews with representative children, youth, and adults of varying ages, genders, and life situations. In these interviews, we ask questions regarding the individual's faith journey, including significant people and life events. We also inquire how the person experiences the community and describes the community's beliefs, values, and practices.

Finally, data collection includes the community's written documents—histories and at least six months of newsletters and bulletins. These materials are used particularly to discern the beliefs, values, practices, and issues of the community over time.

In all observations and interviews, researchers record field notes soon after the event. The team does not read and discuss the collected notes, however, until data collection is well underway. This gives time for concentrated listening before the active work of analysis begins. In addition to regular field notes, researchers keep a record of words and phrases that are used frequently or in novel ways (Bogdan, 1972). The glossary is used later as data regarding the community's language.

Analysis

We turn next to analysis, where our purpose is to discern and interpret patterns in the collected stories. As described earlier, we make notes on insights as they emerge, but we do not study these until we have done several observations. Then we proceed through primary, secondary, and concluding stages of analysis.

Primary: Analysis begins formally when the research team studies a collection of field notes to identify elements and patterns, proceeding until *all* data are taken into account. This analysis asks five questions of the data: (1) frequent words and phrases; (2) symbols; (3) frequent actions and activities; (4) patterns of interaction; and (5) themes. The first three are first-order analyses, and the last two build upon them. Thus, the team asks the questions in order, but moves back and forth as they make new discoveries.

After each analytic session, someone on the research team collates the results. The team then reviews field notes in order to discuss and alter the analyses in subsequent meetings, considering new data as it is collected. Out of this process, a list of community patterns and themes emerges, which includes points of commonality, difference and disputation within the community. These reflect all of the data gathered, which, in turn, reflect a particular time period in the life of a complex, ever-changing community.

Secondary: Where relevant to research purposes, the research team also asks supplementary questions of the data. We may ask, for example, what educational approaches and assumptions people identify explicitly or embody implicitly, or

what approaches to youth ministry they practice. We sometimes add questions corresponding to the four dimensions of Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney (1986)—program, process, social context, and identity. The Carroll team found that analysis along traditional disciplinary lines was less fruitful than analysis focused on these dimensions (see pp. 9–14). Typical of these questions are the following, varied according to the purposes of a study:

1. What are the structures and activities by which faith is supported, nurtured, and formed or transformed?
2. How do the community's interactions contribute to the formation and transformation of faith, and to educational and religious practice?
3. How does the social context contribute to the same?
4. What is the identity of this community, and how does that identity help shape individual persons and the community's beliefs, values and actions?

In the study of schools and communities of mixed religious traditions, such questions are worded more generally, such as: What are the structures and activities by which people learn about religion and values? The use and choice of supplementary questions is determined by the purpose and context of a particular study.

Concluding: The final step of analysis is grouping themes and patterns discovered in the earlier steps. This stage prepares researchers to gather data into a communal story and, later, to engage in more thorough interpretation and theory-building.

Storytelling

The integrative phase of research is storytelling. The purpose is to re-present the life of each community in a way that authentically reveals its life, bringing together the collected accounts. The assumption is that no story ever exhausts the religious experience or linguistic accounts of that experience; however, storytelling is an appropriate way to express the life of a community as a complex whole. Since religious experience is always larger than what is conscious, and since people never even have access to the whole of consciousness, our hope is not to tell *the* community's story, but to tell *an* authentic story of that community.

Analysis done in the previous phase is the source of this story, yet the story form preserves the narrative quality of community life—a complex of relationships within a particular place and period of time. The Ethogenic method thus draws narrative from critical inquiry, seeking to re-integrate the parts with each other and with place and time. This resembles the approach of Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney (1986), who describe narrative as a way to convey the human drama, and critical inquiry as a way to decrease self-deception (see p. 46; cf. Josselson & Lieblich, 1995; 1996).

The storytelling phase takes account of as much data as possible, offering the kind of 'thick description' described by Clifford Geertz (1973, p. 12; cf. 1983). This

means taking account of different perspectives on faith, formation, transformation, and community. No attempt is made to reconcile all accounts, or to reconcile the several congregational stories into a homogenous whole. In fact, pluralistic versions of faith and community life are expected. We assume a world in which pluralistic perspectives always exist and in which one perspective is not necessarily truer than another. The philosopher Nelson Goodman (1972) echoes the earlier discussion on this point: 'There are very many different equally true descriptions of the world...None of them tells us *the* way the world is, but each of them tells us a way the world is' (pp. 30–31). Storytelling in this research is an attempt to describe a community's multiplicity *and* commonality. This is why representatives help read and revise their community story. We want these to be *their* stories and to represent the fullness of their communal life.

In writing these stories, researchers are aware of the possible salutary benefits for the participating communities. Stories can be important to a community's self-understanding and future action, as recognised by others who study religion in community life. Elaine Lawless (2001) recognises the empowering potential of narrative. Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney (1986) emphasise how a congregation's story encourages identity formation. And Cornel West, a neo-pragmatic philosopher, describes the role of narrative in metaphysical reflection and its pragmatic results: 'Acceptable forms of metaphysical reflections are those of synoptic narratives and overarching vocabularies that provide enhancing self-images and enabling coping techniques for living' (West, 1986, p. 56). The hope of this project is that participating communities and readers will experience such benefits.

Interpretation and Theory Building

The fifth phase of research is to interpret and construct theory, drawing theoretical constructs from the communities' lives. This work offers insights and questions for revising and constructing larger theories, and it poses hypotheses for further research. For example, one of our theoretical insights has been that historical patterns continue to influence the beliefs and values of a religious community over time, both consciously and unconsciously. This insight is supported by the communities we studied, and can be compared with research on cultural carry-overs, as found in studies of the African diaspora. Such comparisons lead naturally into further research and reflection.

The process of interpretation and theorising includes many elements, selected according to the purposes of a particular study. These often include: comparative study with literature in the field; critical dialogue with existing theories of education, ethics, and theology; and evaluative interpretation of the communities (e.g., their life-giving, dangerous, and context-related qualities). In all of these forms, theory-building is marked by mutually critical dialogue with the social sciences, education, and theology, by probing the empirical insights and normative questions raised in the community stories, and by opening doors for further study.

Proposals for Practice

The final phase of Ethogenic research is to draw out proposals for practice. In a real sense, this entire research method is a circle of practice, beginning with the study of practice in communities and cultures, and ending with proposals for practice. This last phase is when educational, ethical, and religious prescriptions are appropriate. These prescriptions may be drawn from theoretical insights of the previous phase, or directly from the community stories. Drawing from the theoretical insight named above, a practical proposal is for communities to explore their historical patterns, both to discern actions that fit their communal heritage and to critique their community's natural patterns. Drawing from the community stories, a practical proposal is to search the communal narratives for models, inspiration, or warnings. In studies of religious education, this includes proposals for teaching, for structuring learning communities, and for engaging religious and cultural diversity, whether within one tradition or across diverse traditions.

Conclusion

Presenting the Ethogenic method in this chapter has value for readers who wish to replicate or evaluate the research. It is also valuable for religious or educational communities who wish to study themselves. Ethogenic method is one that allows researchers, educators, and religious leaders to see into the dynamics of community life. The storytelling, theorising, and practical propositions can then contribute to constructive reflection with living communities. The discourse itself will be a source of wisdom, from which significant ideas and actions can be generated for the wellbeing of the larger human community. The idealistic hope is that the stories, ideas and actions that emerge will guide religious and educational leaders toward fuller understanding of diverse communities and cultures and toward life-giving action.

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RELIGION EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

David Chidester

University of Cape Town, South Africa

Introduction

In South Africa teaching and learning about religion in public schools is a rapidly changing and exciting educational field. South Africa is fortunate to have a Constitution, a Department of Education, and from 1999 through to 2004, a Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, who was clearly committed to advancing human rights. Accordingly, as a matter of principle, any policy with respect to religion in school education must be consistent with constitutional values and the social imperatives of building a culture of human rights in post-apartheid South Africa. Education about religion, in this context, is being pursued in a human rights framework.

With respect to religion, government policy in general has adopted a 'co-operative model' for relations between the many religions and the state instead of arrangements based on theocratic establishment, anti-religious antagonism, or strict separation (see Sachs, 1992). By marking major public occasions with prayers from different religious traditions, the government has acknowledged the potential for the many religions of the country to co-operate in building one, unified, South African nation. In public education, however, the Department of Education has made a principled distinction between the many religious interests, which are best served by the home, family, and religious community, and the national public interest in education about religion, religions, and religious diversity in South Africa. This division of labour is reflected in the Revised National Curriculum Statements published by the Department of Education during 2002:

Religion Education...rests on a division of responsibilities between the state on the one hand and religious bodies and parents on the other. Religion Education, therefore, has a civic rather than a religious function, and promotes civic rights and responsibilities. In the context of the South African Constitution, Religion Education contributes to the wider framework of education

by developing in every learner the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary for diverse religions to co-exist in a multi-religious society. Individuals will realise that they are part of the broader community, and will learn to see their own identities in harmony with others (Department of Education, 2002a; 2002b).

The term 'religion education' can be located in a distinctively South African history of resistance, exile, and return. Basil Moore, who was instrumental in the publication of the first collection of essays in black theology (Moore, 1973), went into exile, studied in Britain, and eventually became Professor of Curriculum Development at the University of South Australia, where he developed guidelines for 'religion education' (Moore, 1991; Moore & Habel, 1982). Returning for an extended visit to South Africa in the early 1990s, Basil Moore renewed his religious contacts with black theologians but he also introduced his work on 'religion education' to many South African educators. The new policy of the Department of Education recalls Basil Moore's principled distinction between the religious interests of 'religious education' and the educational objectives of 'religion education.' Adopting a policy of religion education, rather than continuing earlier policies of religious instruction, the Department of Education has emphasised educational outcomes, as well as social benefits, in teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity.

Although the department developed this principled position on educational grounds, the Minister of Education had also consulted widely with religious leaders during the period between 1999 and 2002. In September 2002, Minister Asmal formed a reference group of stakeholders from different religious backgrounds, the Standing Advisory Committee for Religion in Education, for ongoing consultations about the role of religion in schools. Clearly, the policy intends no hostility to religion. At the same time, the department recognises the importance of including beliefs, values, and convictions not necessarily derived from religion. For this reason, the curriculum statements have specified that religion education will include 'belief systems and worldviews.' Neither attacking nor promoting religion, religion education has been formulated as a significant part of the school subject, Life Orientation. As an examinable subject in its own right, Religion Studies has been introduced for grades 10–12, which in South Africa would mean age groups ranging between 16–18 years old. All of this was achieved, however, by overcoming the legacy of apartheid education and by negotiating a way forward in the midst of religious controversy.

Policy

Against the background of a historical legacy that privileged a certain kind of Christian religious instruction in schools, the new policy of religion education has not always been understood. In June 2001, for example, Deputy Minister of Education Mosibudi Mangena delivered a speech on the future of religion in South African public schools to the annual conference of the Students' Christian Union.

Affirming both the national unity and religious diversity of South Africa, the Deputy Minister outlined the new policy for religion in education. Simply, the policy was based not on religious interests but on constitutional values and educational objectives. Within the constitutional framework of a democratic South Africa, the role of religion in the public schools must be consistent with core constitutional values of a common citizenship, human rights, equality, equity, freedom from discrimination and freedom of religion, conscience, thought, belief, and opinion. On educational grounds, public schools have a responsibility to teach about religion and religions in ways that are different from the religious education, instruction, or nurture provided by the home, family, and religious community. In contrast to the promotion of particular religious interests in the 'religious education' of the past, this new policy of 'religion education' advances educational goals of teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity (Mangena, 2001).

Nothing can be said so clearly that it cannot still be misunderstood. In an article covering the speech for *The Teacher*, the headline shouted provocatively, 'Keep God out of the public schools, says Mangena' (Naidu, 2001). Of course, Deputy Minister Mangena said nothing of the sort—rather than making theological or atheological claims, he outlined an educational policy that was consistent with South Africa's Constitution.

Instead of advancing a religious (or antireligious) position, this educational policy is underwritten by crucial constitutional provisions that guarantee both the freedom for religious expression and the freedom from religious coercion. Recognising the vitality and diversity of religion in South Africa, which is clearly protected along with conscience, thought, belief, and opinion (15[1]), the Constitution also guarantees freedom from religious discrimination or discrimination on the basis of religion (9[3]) (South African Government, 1996). Inevitably, the promotion of a particular religion, a set of religions, or a certain religious perspective involves the public schools in religious discrimination by advancing privileged religious interests and discrimination on the basis of religion by disadvantaging learners from 'underprivileged' religious backgrounds. In keeping with the provisions of the Constitution, educational policy must be dedicated not to the teaching, promotion, or propagation of religion but to teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity in South Africa and the world.

Although the distinction between the teaching of religion and teaching about religion often seems to be misunderstood in media coverage, public debates, and religious opposition to the new educational policy, international standards have increasingly been based upon the recognition of the difference between the promotion of religion and education about religion. Under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the consultative conference on religion in school education that was convened in Madrid during November 2001 took this distinction for granted. The report prepared for that conference assumed the basic difference between teaching about religion in schools and the teaching of religion in the catechisms or theologies of religious communities. By definition, according to this report,

Religious Education should be conceived as a tool to transmit knowledge and values pertaining to all religious trends, in an inclusive way, so that individuals realise their being part of the same community and learn to create their own identity in harmony with identities different from their own. As such, religious education radically differs from catechism or theology, defined as the formal study of the nature of God and of the foundations of religious belief, and contributes to the wider framework of education as defined in international standards (Amor, 2001; see Hera & Maria Martínez de Codes, 2002).

Consistent with this definition, South Africa's new educational policy for teaching and learning about religion is inclusive, enabling learners to explore their own identities within the diversity of South Africa. Departing from the compulsory Christian religious indoctrination of the apartheid era, the new policy proposes educational outcomes in teaching and learning about religious diversity that promote empathetic understanding and critical reflection on religious identity and difference. According to this new policy, religion education, supported by clear educational outcomes, curriculum statements, and assessment criteria, can serve important educational outcomes while also working to increase understanding, reduce prejudice, and expand respect for human diversity.

History

Religion Education represents a dramatic departure from the religious education, instruction, or indoctrination of the past. Under the apartheid regime, with its commitment to Christian National Education, a narrow set of religious interests captured religious education. Although all education was supposed to inculcate a Christian national ethos, religious education, assuming a Christian, Bible-based character, sought to produce distinctively religious outcomes. Religious education was driven by a particular kind of Christian confessionalism and triumphalism, a confessionalism that required pupils to embrace prescribed religious convictions and a triumphalism that explicitly denigrated adherents of other religions.

In the old regime, religious education was directed towards compelling learners to make a confession of faith. According to a manual for Biblical Instruction published as recently as 1990, learners were expected to embrace a particular version of Christian faith. Not merely acquiring knowledge, 'Children must personally accept, and trust for their personal salvation, the triune God introduced to them in the Bible' (Department of Didactics, 1990, p. 30). Similarly, a syllabus for Religious Education asserted that the aim for the 'devout teacher' was to ensure that learners, 'through belief in the Holy Trinity,' were able 'to affirm the Apostles' Creed with sincerity and conviction' (cited Chidester, Mitchell, Phiri, & Omar, 1994, p. 15).

Along with these confessional interests, Religious Education and Biblical Studies under apartheid promoted a Christian triumphalism. As the manual in Biblical

Instruction insisted, 'a public school must show tolerance and respect for differing doctrinal convictions, as long as there is no denial of Jesus Christ as the Messiah' (Department of Didactics, 1990, p. 19). In a widely used textbook for Religious Education and Biblical Studies, this Christian triumphalism resulted in claims to a privileged religious ownership of the nation and its public schools by proclaiming that South Africa 'is a Christian country and it is only right that our children be taught in the Christian faith—also in our schools' (Kitshoff & Van Wyk, 1995, p. 182). Abandoning any pretence of tolerance or respect for difference, the textbook asserted bluntly that a 'child who follows the Christian faith is more likely to behave in a moral way than a non-Christian or an un-religious child' (Kitshoff & Van Wyk, 1995, p. 170).

In a constitutional, democratic, and religiously diverse South Africa, this kind of religious education, with its indoctrination of Christian children and denigration of adherents of other religions, certainly cannot be sustained. But what are the other possibilities? Preparing for the democratic transition as early as 1992, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) considered the options. In its report on the curriculum, the NEPI insisted that a democratic South Africa had to abandon the previous system of religious education in which particular religious principles were explicitly taught in Christian religious instruction and implicitly taught throughout the entire curriculum in the name of Christian National Education. As the NEPI found, such an agenda for religious education, instruction, or indoctrination established religious discrimination and religious coercion in education.

Recognising the need for change, the NEPI considered three options: First, the state could eliminate religion entirely from the school curriculum, but neglecting such an important feature of South African life would not do justice to the importance of religious diversity in our history and society. Second, we might establish parallel programmes in religious instruction, developed by different religious groups, but such a parallel model, entrenching a kind of 'religious apartheid,' would still embody religious discrimination and religious coercion, since all students would be required to study a single-tradition religious education programme devoted to particular religious interests. Third, we might introduce a programme of multi-religion education that would teach students about religion rather than engaging in the teaching, confession, propagation, or promotion of religion. Guided by clear educational objectives, teaching and learning about religion and religions in public education promises social benefits of increased tolerance and understanding of diversity (National Education Coordinating Committee, 1992).

Since the publication of these findings of the National Education Policy Investigation, debates about religion and public education have generally revolved around the question of whether or not a compromise could be worked out that accommodated both options two and three, mixing separate programmes of religious instruction, which serve religious interests in the promotion of a state-sanctioned, implicitly supported set of religions, with teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity. After a decade of research, consultations, and

ministerial commissions, the Department of Education finally found that such a mixture of the teaching of religion and teaching about religion was an educational contradiction rather than a viable compromise. As part of the *Manifesto on Values, Education, and Democracy*, the Department of Education (2001) announced its policy of Religion Education. In the revised curriculum, open for public scrutiny and debate, it published the primary educational objective of religion education, within a constitutional and human-rights framework: 'The learner should be able to demonstrate an active commitment to constitutional rights and social responsibilities and shows sensitivity to diverse cultures and belief systems' (Department of Education, 2002a; 2002b). Public controversy ensued, raising important issues, not only about educational policy, but also about the spirit of the nation.

Controversy

In response to the new curriculum, some Christians in South Africa, especially those with ideological, organisational, and financial links with conservative Christian groups in the United States, vigorously objected to the policy for religion education. Through an organised, coordinated campaign, they argued that the new policy violated both their human rights and their constitutional rights to freedom of religion. This campaign drew together apparently separate organisations—a Christian organisation for home schooling (Pestalozzi Trust), a Christian organisation for evangelising Africa (Frontline Fellowship), a Christian political party (the African Christian Democratic Party), and other Christian groupings—in common cause against the new policy, curriculum, and learning outcomes. Looking back on this controversy, it might be useful to reflect briefly on how opposition has come from a range of different Christian points of departure. At the risk of simplifying, we can identify four different Christian positions—Reconstructionist, Protectionist, Ecumenical, and Interfaith—that have expressed very different religious interests in opposing the new policy.

First, as the most vocal opponents, Christian Reconstructionists have mobilised letter-writing campaigns, media events, and public meetings against the new policy. Culminating in a public meeting in the Western Cape at the Christian Centre on 9 October 2001, these opponents advanced the argument that teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity, which is an educational rather than a religious activity, was actually promoting a religious worldview. Summarising the meeting of 'concerned Christians' at the Christian Centre, the reporter noted that the principal problem with the new policy was its 'active promotion of a single set of values under the guise of tolerance' (Christian Centre, 2001). These values, which were glossed as relativism, situational ethics, and the equality of all religions, were castigated as the basic elements of a New Age religion. The reporter declared:

This set of implicit values is present in most New Age systems of thought. Teaching and assessment based on these values effectively constitutes state

promotion of a religious worldview in itself (secular humanism). This is in total contradiction with the constitutional provision of freedom of religion (Christian Centre, 2001).

Although the promotion of relativism, situational ethics, and the religious equivalence of religions nowhere appears in the policy, 'concerned Christians' at this meeting could nevertheless discern the implicit traces of a religious worldview, the religion of 'secular humanism,' which was allegedly being established in public schools as an act of religious discrimination against Christians (Christian Centre, 2001).

Although this campaign certainly drew in parents who were concerned about the direction of educational policy in South Africa, the argument that education about religion 'implicitly' promoted a religious worldview—the religion of secular humanism—was derived from right-wing Christian organisations in the United States of America. Insisting that 'secular humanism' has been defined as a religion by the United States of America Supreme Court, Christian opponents of the new educational policy in South Africa have been misled by right-wing Christian campaigns in America that have actually failed to sustain that case, especially in their attempts to exclude science textbooks that do not explicitly promote the biblical account of creation on the grounds that they thereby implicitly promote the 'religion of secular humanism.'

In the case of the Pestalozzi Trust, this organisation for home schooling was explicitly linked, not only to a conservative Christian parent organisation in the United States of America, but also to the work of R. J. Rushdoony, the American founder of Christian Reconstructionism. Advocating a literal interpretation of the Bible and a literal adherence to biblical law, Rushdoony inspired the Chalcedon Foundation, the Institute for Christian Economics, the Rutherford Institute, and other right-wing Christian organisations in the United States. Rushdoony was a champion of religious apartheid. 'Segregation or separation,' he wrote, 'is a basic principle of Biblical law with respect to religion and morality' (Rushdoony, 1973, p. 294). In defence of religious apartheid, Rushdoony opposed any form of civil toleration of religious difference, because 'the believer is asked to associate on a common level of total acceptance with the atheist, the pervert, the criminal, and the adherents of other religions as though no differences existed' (Rushdoony, 1973, p. 294). Under the influence of such religious prejudice, Christian Reconstructionists urge South African parents to prevent their children from being exposed to 'foreign' religions, forgetting that those religious and other belief systems are not foreign but flourishing in South Africa.

Disregard for adherents of other religions informs not only theory but also political practice among Christian Reconstructionists. According to a prominent disciple of Rushdoony, Gary North, Christian Reconstructionists are justified in manipulating democratic, constitutional means for Christian ends. 'We must use the doctrine of religious liberty to gain independence for Christian schools,' North wrote, 'until we train up a generation of people who know there is no religious neutrality, no neutral law, no neutral education, and no neutral civil government'

(North, 1982, p. 25). Once that programme in Christian religious education was far enough advanced, North declared, then the students it produced would 'get busy constructing a Bible-based social, political, and religious order which finally denies the religious liberty of the enemies of God' (North, 1982, p. 25).

Certainly, Christian Reconstructionism, with its manipulative rhetoric, religious apartheid, and anti-democratic tactics, cannot provide any basis for educational policy in a diverse and democratic South Africa. Nevertheless, during the second half of 2001, most of the media attention given to the new curriculum was framed by the religious agenda of Christian Reconstructionists.

Second, Christian Protectionists, who have also gained some media attention, have been trying to retain the religious benefits of the old system of religious education. Wanting to preserve the status accorded to a particular kind of Christian religious and biblical instruction under the apartheid regime, these opponents of the new policy have an agenda that is different than the American-influenced 'concerned Christians.' Nevertheless, on many points, these defenders of the old order have made common cause with arguments advanced by the Christian Reconstructionists. In a widely distributed statement by Professor Pieter de Villiers, Chair of the South African Society of Biblical and Religious Studies, the new educational policy is attacked, not as a New Age religion, but as a 'new ideology in school religion' (De Villiers, 2001). The organisation that Professor De Villiers represents, which until recently was the 'Society for Biblical Studies in South Africa,' engaged in a cynical manipulation of terminology by adding to its title, the phrase, 'Religious Studies,' to suggest that its members had expertise in the open, plural, intercultural, and interdisciplinary study of religion and religions. Based on Professor De Villiers's statement in opposition to the new policy, it is difficult to conclude that he actually represents teaching and research in Religious Studies in South Africa.

Ignoring the logical, methodological, and constitutional problems entailed by combining separate programs in the promotion of religion with education about religion, De Villiers longs for an arrangement, considered by an earlier ministerial commission, which he thinks 'sanely allowed other options next to a multi-religious approach in schools' (De Villiers, 2001; see Department of Education, 1999, p. 5; Stonier, 1998). Those 'other options,' referring to separate programmes in Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and perhaps 'other' religious instruction, although how far the 'other' extends is unclear, stand in contradiction to teaching and learning about religion, in all its diversity, as a viable educational programme in South African public schools. Living with such a basic contradiction cannot be a formula for sanity. According to De Villiers, however, local schools should be allowed to work out those 'other options,' in the light of their particular, distinctive, religious ethos. In whatever way those local religious interests might be adjudicated, however, the advancement of religious interests would still come into conflict with constitutional protections against discriminating for or against religions.

In defending single-faith religious instruction, De Villiers made the remarkable assertion that Christian religious education can provide the basis for 'understanding among faiths' in a 'healthy society,' because in the wake of the destruction of the

World Trade Centre, 'Christian churches without multi-religious leanings in the United States organised the protection of Muslim communities' (De Villiers, 2001). Although De Villiers seemed to be advocating a Christian religious education that would fulfil the curricular outcome of showing sensitivity to diverse cultures and belief systems, even 'without multi-religious leanings,' this prospect is as remote in the United States as it is in South Africa. It is difficult to argue that Muslim communities would feel safe in a Christian America. Despite his quasi-scientific, medicalised, or psychologised rhetoric of 'sane' and 'healthy,' the Chair of the South African Society of Biblical and Religious Studies actually wants to protect Christian religious interests in education, even by advancing the unsupportable proposal that Christian education is a good basis for dealing with religious diversity in South Africa.

By contrast, a third position, Christian Ecumenical, has been drawn into this controversy, perhaps reluctantly, since most of its adherents are not interested in defending the particular kind of Christian privilege inherited from the apartheid regime. As a broad-based, ecumenical Christian association, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) has certainly earned credibility in wrestling with a wide range of social problems in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. In his diatribe against religion education, Pieter de Villiers invoked the support of the SACC. According to De Villiers (2001), at its triennial national conference in August 2001, the SACC passed a motion 'requesting the minister not to impose the multi-religious approach on schools as an exclusive system'. Dramatically misrepresenting the deliberations within the SACC, this statement also distorts the actual resolution of the conference. As that resolution was formulated, the SACC affirmed the basic educational aims, objectives, and outcomes of the new policy of religion education. Regarding the question of religion and public education as a complex and sensitive issue, the SACC held 'that it is important for learners to be informed about the various religious beliefs of the people of South Africa' (South African Council of Churches [SACC], 2001).

At the same time, the SACC accepted submissions from constituents interested in maintaining single-faith programmes in Christian education in the schools. Accordingly, the SACC resolved that its General Secretary should engage in conversations with the Minister of Education 'with the intention of promoting a religious education policy that makes provision for both a multi-religious approach and for single-faith learning programs' (SACC, 2001). Unlike the Christian Reconstructionists or Christian Protectionists, therefore, the ecumenical Christians of the SACC recognised and affirmed the important educational value of learning about the religious beliefs of all the people of South Africa.

Finally among Christian objections, a Christian Interfaith position can be identified that objects not to learning about religions but to the apparent absence of explicit attention to spirituality in the new policy. Assuming that learning about religions will not engage the affective, emotional, or spiritual development of learners, as if learning about religion was only cognitive, this position asserts that the policy is flawed because it does not explicitly identify outcomes of 'spiritual

development.’ According to Paul Faller, a prominent Catholic educator, director of the Catholic Institute of Education, innovator in the field of inter-religious education, and chair of the ministerial committee for religious education during its deliberations in 1998, the new policy does not adequately address spiritual interests because it ‘will not invite the learner to the challenge of spiritual and moral development, or to the appreciation of and free commitment to a specific faith commitment’ (Faller, 2001). Faller calls for ‘a formative rather than a purely descriptive Religious Education’.

Although the new educational policy definitely does not promote religious, spiritual, or faith commitments, it also does not foreclose any opportunities for learners to make any of these personal discoveries in, and through, the process of learning about religious and other convictions. In the process of learning about religion, pupils can certainly also learn from, with, and through religion in ways that form their own commitments. Religion Education, as a formative enterprise, develops not only critical skills in description and analysis but also creative capacities for imagination, empathy, exploration, and discovery. The assessment standard specified for Religion Education in the final year, Grade 12 (17–18 years old), certainly points to this formative capacity by expecting the learner to formulate ‘a personal mission statement based on core aspects of personal philosophies, values, beliefs and ideologies, which will inform and direct actions in life’ (Department of Education, 2002b). Unlike the religious formation enforced by the Religious Education of the past, however, this educational goal is not determined by any prescribed religious content. It is perhaps because of the mistakes of the past that even religious educators who are open to religious diversity have tried to mobilise religious opposition to the new policy.

Different religious interests, therefore, have surfaced in the controversy over the new policy for religion education. Although ‘concerned Christians’ have spoken against the policy, religious leaders from a variety of religious communities have supported this new initiative. In public education, as Father Albert Nolan has argued, ‘the school is not responsible for nurturing the religious development of the scholars but for providing learners with the knowledge about religion and morality and values and the diversity of religions’ (Nolan, 2001). Representing the Muslim Judicial Council, Sheikh Achmat Sedick has observed that there is no problem with religion education ‘as long as it is orientation and not indoctrination’ (Lombard, 2001, p. 5). In meetings with the Minister of Education, other religious leaders have indicated their support for teaching and learning about religion. Religious opposition or support, however, cannot determine national policy for religion in public education. Instead, as the new policy insists, the role of religion in schools must be consistent with constitutional provisions for freedom of religious and other beliefs, and freedom from religious and other discrimination.

Within this constitutional framework, trained educators rather than religious leaders, clergy, or the old regime’s ‘devout teachers’ must take the lead in developing resources for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity. Although innovative textbooks have been developed, much more needs to

be done to provide teachers with effective materials and methods for realising the educational objectives of religion education. Recent textbooks for religion education enable learners to explore religious diversity (Amin, Jankelson-Groll, Mndende, Omar & Sadie, 1998), religious festivals (Stonier, Mndende, Omar, Pillay, & Reisenberger, 1996), sacred places (Stonier & Derrick, 1997), and African indigenous religious heritage (Kwenda, Mndende & Stonier, 1997). Although much more needs to be done, these and other resources that are currently being produced represent a good beginning for religion education in South Africa.

Curriculum

Between educational policy and educational practice in the classroom, of course, a huge gap looms. In his opposition to the new policy, the Catholic educator Paul Faller has actually celebrated this gap, observing that teachers will be 'defining and redefining the curriculum every day, in every classroom,' so by encouraging teachers to advance a religious education that is 'formative and not simply informative,' he hopes to be able to establish in practice what he could not achieve in policy (Faller, 2002).

Certainly, religious educators who have religious interests will find other ways to subvert the new policy. In the light of the recommendations of the final document from the International Consultative Conference on School Education in Relation with Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance, and Non-Discrimination held in Madrid during November 2001, (Hera & Maria Martínez de Codes, 2002) educators in South Africa are faced with the challenge not only of formulating policy and curricula but also of providing teachers with materials, methods, and training for teaching about religion, religions, and religious diversity in South Africa and the larger world.

During 2002, progress was made on clarifying the general curriculum for Religion Education as part of the subject area of Life Orientation. As the curriculum for this area was negotiated, learning about religion was located in the context of 'social development,' situated in relation to learning about human rights, democratic participation, diversity, and community. In General Education and Training (GET, Grades R–9), the learning outcome for Social Development, at every level, was specified: 'The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions' (Department of Education, 2002a). Along with outcomes in Health Promotion, Personal Development, and Physical Development and Movement, this learning outcome for Social Development makes up the learning area of Life Orientation. In Further Education and Training (FET, Grades 10–12), we find a similar location of teaching and learning about religion within Life Orientation, with religion education situated within the learning outcome for Responsible Citizenship in which: 'The learner is able to demonstrate competence and commitment regarding the values and rights that underpin the constitution in order to practice responsible citizenship, and enhance social justice and sustainable

living’ (Department of Education, 2002b). Throughout the curriculum, therefore, teaching and learning about religion is integrated into social development and citizenship education.

Within that context, learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity is registered in terms of assessment standards. At each grade, summarised here from Reception (i.e. the grade before grade 1) through to 12, the learner demonstrates the achievement of the broader educational outcome of social development with respect to the component of religion education when he or she:

- R: Identifies and names symbols linked to own religion.
- 1: Matches symbols associated with a range of religions in South Africa.
- 2: Describes important days from diverse religions.
- 3: Discusses diet, clothing, and decorations in a variety of religions in South Africa.
- 4: Discusses significant places and buildings in a variety of religions in South Africa.
- 5: Discusses festivals and customs from a variety of religions in South Africa.
- 6: Discusses the dignity of the person in a variety of religions in South Africa.
- 7: Explains the role of oral traditions and scriptures in a range of the world’s religions.
- 8: Discusses the contributions of organisations from various religious to social development.
- 9: Reflects on and discusses the contributions of various religions in promoting peace.
- 10: Displays knowledge about the major religions, ethical traditions, and belief systems in South Africa, clarifies own values and beliefs, and respects the rights of others to hold their own.
- 11: Critically analyses moral issues and dilemmas and explains the consequences of beliefs and actions.
- 12: Formulates a personal mission statement based on core aspects of personal philosophies, values, beliefs and ideologies, which will inform and direct actions in life (Department of Education, 2002a, 2002b).

Certainly, these educational expectations, which enable learners to begin engaging with the religious diversity of their country and world, should be part of social development and citizenship education. In order to participate in a unified non-racial, non-sexist, and democratic South Africa, as well as in an increasingly globalising world, learners will need at least this level of educational engagement with religion, religions, and religious diversity.

To give a sense of proportion, however, we need to recognise that the curriculum has actually allowed very little space for this educational activity. In Grades R-9, the learning area of Life Orientation, which includes four outcomes—Health Promotion, Social Development, Personal Development, and Physical Development and Movement—has been allocated eight percent of the teaching time out of the total curriculum. As one of four outcomes in Life Orientation, Social Development can

be expected to account for two percent of teaching time. As one in four assessment standards within Social Development, Religion Education ends up accounting for perhaps 0.5 percent of the overall curriculum content. Although these calculations cannot be applied mechanically, we can only conclude that Religion Education, the focus of so much controversy and contestation, actually has only a very small share of the general curriculum in South African schools.

So, have we been fighting over nothing (or almost nothing) in these battles over the future of religion in South African public schools? Although we have ended up with less than anyone wanted, perhaps we have ended up with exactly what we need. In a country that takes religion very seriously, with strong bonds of religious solidarity, but also with the potential for religious misunderstandings, divisions, and conflict, the relatively small space given for religion in schools might be just right. Situated firmly with a human rights framework, and integrated into educational outcomes for citizenship, social development, and social justice, teaching and learning about religion might actually be in the right proportion to the rest of the curriculum for what South Africa needs at this historical moment. At the very least, the limited time and space allocated for religion in the curriculum help clarify religious objections to the new policy for Religion Education.

On the one hand, religious educators arguing for a religious, religious productive, or 'formative' religious education could certainly not argue in good conscience that a child's religious formation can possibly be managed by public schools within the small amount of classroom time allocated to religion. Instead, as the new educational policy suggests, religious formation must be the responsibility of homes, families, and religious communities. Given the demands on the curriculum, the best we can hope for is that the school can provide learners with a basic introduction to religion, religions, and religious diversity in ways that might increase understanding, reduce prejudice, and facilitate respect. If those educational goals are to be achieved, then religion cannot be dealt with religiously. In the space and time available, religion, like other aspects of human formation, such as race, class, and gender, must be addressed critically and creatively as part of the social fabric of South Africa that every child should study.

On the other hand, religious educators arguing against the viability of educational initiatives in teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity must come to terms with the modest goals of Religion Education. No child, many of these religious educators have argued, should be exposed to other religions until their own religious identity has been formed. Caving into religious pressure from 'Concerned Christians' with an interest in determining the religious formation of children, the Provincial Minister of Education in the Western Cape, André Gaum, in April 2002 announced that his province would not be implementing the new provisions of the curriculum for Religion Education. Insisting that, 'awareness of other religions is best developed later in the school child's life,' this provincial Minister of Education defied national policy by instructing his department to develop programmes for Grades R through 6 that 'do not include requirements for study of other religions' (Gaum, 2002). In other words, he insisted that learners within his

jurisdiction should be prevented from achieving the minimal expectations of the curriculum during these years that would enable them to identify and name symbols linked to their own religion, describe important days from diverse religions, and discuss diet, clothing, and decorations, significant places and buildings, festivals and customs, and the dignity of the person in a variety of religions in South Africa. Although he thought he was responding to legitimate religious interests, Provincial Minister of Education André Gaum was actually condemning his pupils to ignorance about their world.

These struggles continue. Sufficient progress has been made, however, in policy, curriculum, and materials development to support education about religion that is consistent with South African constitutional values and international initiatives in human rights such as the Madrid Document of 2001 (Hera & Maria Martínez de Codes, 2002). With respect to religion and belief, these principles have been established in South African educational policy and national curriculum. Following the recommendations from Madrid, we are faced with the challenges of training, motivating, and enabling teachers, of documenting 'best practices' in education about religion, and of furthering international exchanges in the field of religion education. Even within the small compass allowed by the curriculum for this enterprise, enormous gains can be anticipated in advancing education in human rights, citizenship, social justice, and diversity by paying attention to religion and religions, not as a religious activity, but as an educational priority in teaching and learning about our world.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CULTURE IN MODERN TURKEY

Recep Kaymakcan

Faculty of Theology, University of Sakarya, Turkey

Introduction

Officially Turkey has been a secular country since 1937. It is also a predominantly Muslim country with few members of other faiths. The place of religious education has been frequently discussed in the main because of the fluctuating relationship between state and religion. Until recently, the agenda of discussions pertaining to religious education generally focused on the existence of religious education in state schools; the quality of religious education received meagre attention. Following the acceptance of religious education as an academic discipline at university level, the introduction of compulsory religious education in schools and the recognition of the importance of the science of education, academics and members of the media have begun to discuss the quality of religious education in Turkish schools. The move towards membership of the European Community has accelerated this process.

The traditional understanding of the teaching of religion has had, and continues to have, a great influence on religious education in schools in Turkey. There has been, however, a considerable shift from a traditional to a more pluralistic religious education (with the introduction of the new primary religious education curriculum in 2000). To understand these recent changes more accurately we need to look at the traditional teaching of Islam within Turkish religious education. I shall outline this traditional teaching of religion (Islam), defined here as the ‘ilmihal centred approach’; and then summarise the new developments. It is necessary first of all to set this discussion in the context of the history of the development of religious education in modern Turkey

Historical Background and Legal Provision of Religious Education

Perhaps the most spectacular development in Islamic education in contemporary Islam has occurred in Turkey. As a successor of the Ottoman Empire, the nation-state of Turkey came into existence in 1923. This was more than a political event; it was also a social, cultural, and economic revolution. In this context, secularism emerged as a vital, and key, concept. The boundary between religion and politics in Turkey was drawn in terms of secular principles; the major reforms were closely connected with secularism.

Within religious education itself in modern Turkey many fluctuations can be observed. For a quarter of a century, in the republican era, the Turkish educational system worked on a strictly secular basis: all levels of religious education were officially banned. After the Second World War, improving socio-economic relations with Western democracies and the introduction of a multi-party system influenced the educational structure; religion itself emerged as a political and cultural issue especially during the transition from a one-party to a multi-party system (from 1946–1950). This revival of interest in religion was part of an ideological reaction against the strict secularism of the republic among a diverse group of individuals who felt that the moral basis of the society was being corroded and that there should be open criticism of the restrictions the government imposed on religious teaching. Soon after the introduction of a multi-party system, the political parties were quick to realise the potent force of Islam in their efforts to mobilise mass support. Right wing parties, in particular, began to take a more liberal attitude towards religion. This liberal attitude in dealing with religion and religious practice continued to characterise the behaviour of Turkish governments throughout the following decades (Kushner, 1986). In this context religious education emerged as an important issue. After a long debate at the political level, religious education in state schools was introduced on a voluntary basis not only in primary schools (by 1949), but also in middle schools (by 1956) and in high schools (by 1967). This optional religious education in schools continued up to 1982 (Bilgin, 1990).

After the 1980 military take-over, the issue of the introduction of compulsory religious education was hotly discussed by a range of different people and groups. The eventual decision of the Military Security Council was announced in Erzurum by the President of Turkey as well as the head of the military council in a public speech on 24 July 1981:

By taking this new decision, religious education will be introduced in every primary, middle and high school on a compulsory basis. Consequently our pupils will receive religious education from state schools. In the majority of Western countries religious education is given by schools. In fact, compulsory religious education in schools is compatible with secularist principles. In this matter Atatürk stated: 'Religion must be taken out from the hands of ignorant people, and the control should be given to the appropriate people'. For these reasons, we will introduce compulsory religious education in our schools (Milli Guvenlik Konseyi Genel Sekreterliği, 1981, p. 181).

This compulsory religious education, in both elementary and intermediate schools, was to have several purposes. One was the provision of knowledge: about religion in general, the Islamic religion, and ethics. Another was the desire to develop ethical and virtuous human beings. Religious education was in these ways in harmony with Turkish national educational policy and its general goals and principles as well as with Atatürk's principles of secularism. It was thus to strengthen, from a religious and ethical perspective Kemalism, national unity and solidarity, and humanitarianism (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1981).

This decision was included in the 1982 Constitution as the 24th article. The new regulation changed the official name of religious education to 'Religious Culture and Ethics Knowledge'. Courses were to be taught from fourth grade primary to the end of middle school for two hours per week; and, in high school, for one hour. This remains the legal position. It should be noted that there is only one ground for exemption from compulsory religious education: a pupil who is an adherent of a non-Islamic religion such as Christianity or Judaism has the right to withdraw from taking the course of religious education. There is no alternative provision, such as a course in ethics, for someone who exercises this right of withdrawal (Kaymakcan, 1997).

Ilmihal-Centred Approach in the Teaching of Islam

The traditional teaching of Islam both inside and outside school religious education in Turkey can be described as the 'ilmihal-centred approach'. This understanding of teaching Islam, developed during Turkish-Islamic cultural history, has had a great impact on religious education in schools. It has itself recently incorporated some pedagogical improvements.

Brief History of Ilmihal in Turkish Tradition

The word 'ilm hal', derived from the Arabic language and literally meaning 'knowledge of circumstances', refers to 'a book written to teach principles of religion' according to the Turkish language dictionary (Turk Dil Kurumu, 1988, p. 232). An ilmihal is a book written in response to the practical needs of ordinary Muslims; it usually aims to provide knowledge in terms of three dimensions of Islam: faith (*iman*), worship (*ibadat*) and ethics (*akhlaq*). Its language is usually simple and straightforward because it is written for a wide range of Muslims (Bayram, 1981). In its content and structure, ilmihal may be seen as the interpretation of the well-known Hadith of Gabriel:

One day while the Prophet was sitting in the company of some people, (The angel) Gabriel came and asked, 'What is faith?' Allah's Apostle replied, 'Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection.' Then he further asked, 'What is Islam?' Allah's Apostle replied, 'To worship Allah alone and none else, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay the compulsory charity (Zakat) and to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan.'

Then he further asked, ‘What is Ihsan (perfection)?’ Allah’s Apostle replied, ‘To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you.’...Then that man (Gabriel) left and the Prophet asked his companions to call him back, but they could not see him. Then the Prophet said, ‘That was Gabriel who came to teach the people their religion.’ Abu ‘Abdullah said: He (the Prophet) considered all that as a part of faith (Bukhari, vol. 1, book 2, no. 47).

This hadith clearly emphasises the importance of faith, worship and ethics in the teaching of Islam. Bayram argued that these three realms, inherited from this hadith, became the model for the ilmihal tradition in Anatolia (Bayram, 1981). Ilmihal generally gives more emphasis to the second area (worship) because Muslims need to learn more about acts of worship. Historically, the entitled ‘*Menahic-i Seyfi*’ written by the scholar Ahi Evren in Persian in 1184 was the first study in the style of the ilmihal tradition in Anatolia. The first Turkish language ilmihal (Mukaddime) was produced by Iznikli Kutbuddin in 1418 (Bayram). Afterwards, a very large number of works in the ilmihal form were written in Turkey. The seven-century-old ilmihal tradition was created to meet the demands of the mass of the Muslim population for the teaching of Islam.

In the last years of the Ottomans, ilmihal became in addition a name for a school subject; and one that was generally included in the newly-established secular primary school curriculum. For instance, ilmihal as a subject could be seen in the primary school curriculum (ibtida-i mektepleri) in 1892 and 1904, where it was used to refer to teaching Islam (Akyuz, 1989). It was also included in the first year of the Asiret Mektebi which were opened by the reign of Abdulhamid II to educate the sons of tribal leaders at secondary school level (Rogan, 1996). Again, Ziya Gokalp, the founder of modern Turkish nationalism, provided a place for ilmihal in his proposed school curriculum (Berkes, 1959). As a result, it can correctly be said that the ilmihal approach has a deep and strong historical base, both in Turkish religious culture and in school education.

Buyuk Islam Ilmihali (Great Islamic Ilmihal): An Exemplar Ilmihal

In order to illustrate what is meant by ilmihal and the ilmihal-centred approach, I shall select one representative ilmihal among many ilmihals from the republican period in Turkey: the ilmihal ‘*Buyuk Islam Ilmihali*’ (Great Islam Ilmihali) written by the famous republican Muslim scholar Omer N. Bilmen in 1949. Several reasons may be given for selecting it. Firstly, it was the first comprehensive ilmihal produced in that period. Secondly, its framework has provided an example for later ilmihals. Thirdly, nobody can argue that there is a more well-known ilmihal in Turkey. It has sold approximately three million copies, and perhaps, after the Qur’an, is the second widely used religious source in Turkey. Finally, the author of this ilmihal, Bilmen, is one of the most highly appreciated and respected religious scholars both among different Muslim groups and within the state in recent history (Yavuz, 1993).

Above all, he is significant for this context because of his scholarly competence and, more importantly, his attitude to politics, since he paid special attention to remaining steadfastly apolitical.

A review of *Buyuk Islam Ilmihali* (1996) can provide the basis for the discussion of the ilmihal-centred approach. The aim of ilmihal tradition is to provide a basic knowledge about Islam in a descriptive and authoritative manner. It aims to respond to some religious issues in terms of the needs of ordinary believers in our time. Bilmen's ilmihal deals mainly with three aspects of Islam: faith, worship and ethics. In its final chapter, it discusses the history of the prophets. The ten chapters vary considerably in length according to the subject matter.

Chapter one deals with Islamic faith. After a brief reference to a system of classification of religions, the six acts of faith in Islam are explained. These are: belief in one God, angels, sacred Scriptures, prophets, life after death and predestination. The six acts of faith are then elaborated according to traditional understanding. In other words, the reasons provided for every tenet of Islamic faith are drawn, in the main, from the understanding of the Islamic faith community alone.

The next five chapters contain detailed explorations of the acts of worship (*ibadat*) in Islam which are often referred to as the 'five pillars of Islam'. These consist of the declaration of faith, prescribed prayer (*salat*), fasting (*savm*), legal alms (*zekat*) and the pilgrimage (*hajj*). The seventh chapter, which concerns sacrifice and its types in Islam as an aspect of worship, can also be included within *ibadat* because sacrificing an animal at '*Eid al-Adha*' is a religious act. About 360 pages, or almost two thirds of the book, are devoted to explaining this dimension, (*ibadat*) of Islam. It is arguable that the decision to allocate such a large part of the book to matters of worship was made on the basis of their practical importance.

Chapters eight and nine offer a body of information dealing with Islamic ethics and moral obligations. The author briefly discusses the issue of the source of ethics and concludes that, without religious support, an ethical system cannot respond to the demands of the people. Only religious ethics, in other words, meet the requirements of the spiritual development of human beings. Chapter eight in particular provides guidance on the regulations a Muslim should or should not observe in personal life.

The final chapter is concerned with the history of the messengers mentioned in the Qur'an. These are mainly treated according to the Islamic sources. Priority is given to the Prophet Muhammad with the lives of 24 other prophets being narrated briefly.

The Features of the Ilmihal-Centred Approach

It is possible to identify five features of the Ilmihal-centred approach that have been, at least until the changes, discussed below, in 2000, very influential in the implementation of Turkish religious education. It is arguable that even now these features are powerful factors within the debates.

Contents of Teaching Islam and Turkish Secularism

The ilmihal approach stresses, through its selection of content, faith, worship and ethics; it ignores the social and political dimensions of Islam. To that extent, this emphasis may be described as a heresy by some Muslims who recognise Islam as a complete way of life, rather than a religion in the Western sense.

The prescribed content of ilmihal is certainly reflected in the present (pre-2000) content of textbooks for religious education in schools. The religious education curriculum has consistently included those aspects of Islam that affect the individual; and has excluded almost everything dealing with the social aspects of Islam. At this point, it should not be forgotten that those who select the content of the curriculum cannot fail to be influenced by the strong relationship between state policy and the content of education. Each curriculum area takes state policy into account in the selection of content. In a country where secularism has become a vital feature for education, as is now the case in Turkey, the secular state may prefer the teaching of doctrinal and ritual aspects that do not interfere with secular government policies (Tulasiewicz, 1993). It can be suggested that, by ignoring the social dimension of Islam and so in practice advocating individualistic religion, ilmihal does not contradict the Turkish understanding of secularism. Indeed, the outlook of ilmihal is consistent with the Turkish understanding of secularism.

In Turkey, the demarcation of the preaching of Islam permitted to the Presidency of Religious Affairs effectively draws the boundary between secularism and religion. According to the law entitled the Presidency of Religious Affairs (dated 1926) and subsequent legislation, the President's remit was restricted to the duties of administering the mosques and supervising the religious civil servants, together with the task of providing information on all matters concerning the beliefs, rituals and ethics of Islam (Tarhanli, 1993). The social aspect of Islam, *mu'amalat* (civil relations), was distinguished from both faith and ritual, and excluded from the scope of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Ilmihal was, similarly, historically intended to inform and nurture the individual dimension of Muslims' religion rather than to provide detailed knowledge of Shari'ah, Islamic politics etc. Therefore, it might be justifiably be claimed that the lack of reference to the social aspect of Islam in the content of most school religious education textbooks implies a secular approach.

Confessional Approach

The ilmihal-centred approach follows a confessional approach for teaching religion. The term 'a confessional approach' refers to the overt teaching and strengthening of a particular religion, its doctrines and its way of life. It begins with the assumption that the aim of religious education is intellectual and cultic indoctrination. Ilmihal emphasises nurture in faith, assumes a common faith (Islam) as a point of departure, and is authoritative in its claims. In a sense, it is like a dialogue of believers who suffer from a lack of pedagogical dimension.

At the beginning of his first chapter, Bilmen describes a genuine (true) religion as 'a collection of divine commandments and regulations which was revealed by

God via his prophets' (Bilmen, 1996, p. 12). According to this account, religions are divided into three groups: divine religion, corrupted divine religion, and non-divine religion. For him, Islam is the only true divine religion, because other divine religions such as Judaism and Christianity have lost their original forms. He evaluates other religions apart from Judaism, Christianity and Islam as non-divine; they are religions that were somehow fabricated by human beings. In harmony with this classification, the whole book tries to demonstrate the implicit and/or explicit superiority of Islam over other religious traditions, and to advocate the nurturing of people in Islam. When it is necessary to compare one issue across religions, the author takes into consideration only Judaism and Christianity (in addition to Islam). For instance, in the last chapter of the ilmihal, in treating the life of Jesus, all the information is gathered from Islamic sources, and it is claimed that 'after Jesus Christianity changed and lost its authenticity, and Jesus was only a prophet' (Bilmen, 1996, p. 493).

Until very recently the religious education curriculum in Turkish schools has also advocated a confessional approach. The earlier primary and present secondary textbooks for religious education use exactly the same classification of religions as that outlined above. In this respect, religious education was probably the adaptation of the ilmihal approach with some amendments (Kaymakcan, 1999).

A Historical Form of Islam

The religious issues in the ilmihal have been discussed in the context of the past (and expressed generally in very abstract truths): little or no attempt has been made to find connections with contemporary religious life. Bilmen (1996) advocates following more closely the generally accepted comments of religious scholars who lived in the early years of Islamic history. This was seen as a virtue in Islam (Bilmen). The early period of certainty regarding the interpretations of, and discussions about, Islam has been presented without taking into consideration any current modern problems or living realities. Even some minor updating in order to understand an Islamic issue more accurately cannot be provided in the ilmihal. For example, in the section on alms (zakah) the old weight measures, such as dirhem and miskal, have been used to describe the limit of financial liability in almsgiving instead of the present weight measure, kilogram, in Turkey (Bilmen). It is also impossible to find any reference to the modern implementation of Islamic duties, or to ways in which (and to what extent) religion is influential in Turkey and the Islamic world. In short, the ilmihal shows little interest either in accommodating the living form of Islam and present day realities and problems or in the implications of living out daily life as an adherent of a religion.

In religious education in schools, textbooks are still mostly based on the promulgation of the historical form of Islam. There is, however, some improvement in presenting religion in such a way as to take account of its living form, as the recent primary religious education curriculum recommends, in order to build up a connection between everyday reality and religious principles. It is now widely

accepted that one of the aims of religious education is to make pupils aware of the religious dimension of life and to help them in the quest for meaning and purpose in their life. To do so, it is vital to find a link between religion and daily life. Religion is not only a historical reality; it is also a living fact.

Traditional Learning

The ilmihal aims to *transmit* a system of knowledge, beliefs and values. For it, everything has already been done by the earlier great scholars: our student's duty is to learn or memorise the ready-made knowledge about religion. It would be wrong to assume that the ilmihal encourages the learning or teaching of religion in the context of questioning and presenting a range of arguments on religious issues. According to its approach, reasoning in religious matters can be used only to understand deeply the wisdom of selected and authorised thoughts and interpretations of early Islamic scholars. This tendency may also be observed in the understanding of knowledge. The achievement of knowledge is described as attainable through learning the prescribed knowledge without scrutiny or criticism. The ilmihal discouraged the development and production of new comments and criticism in religious matters (Bilmen, 1996). In this respect, this understanding of, and attitude towards, knowledge are reminiscent of the late Ottoman madrasa tradition. According to Atay (1995), the pedagogy of late Ottoman madrasas was mainly based on teaching one opinion about any religious issue from one selected book, while discarding further opinions and genuine discussions. Different ideas about a particular issue were only introduced so that they could be refuted in order to support the approved opinion. Moreover, the fear of anything constituting unbelief (kufr), and the lack of critical evaluation of religious problems and ideas led to an increasing deterioration in the process of learning in the madrasa. (Gungor, 1981). It should also be noted that even the taxonomy of teaching Islam, both inside and outside schools in Turkey, has been deeply influenced by the madrasa understanding of Islam.

Religious education in Turkish schools tends to reflect the madrasa understanding of religion notwithstanding the fact that such an understanding has been strongly criticised by Turkish scholars and intellectuals. Of course, there have been some improvements in recent years with the development of educational science to make religious education more acceptable for the pedagogy of our time. On the whole, however, religious education has not provided a place for controversial issues either in the curriculum or in the textbooks, and there has been little in the way of efforts to promote the understanding of and questioning about religion.

Supremacy of Hanafi School of Thought

The teaching of one particular legal school is used to present Islam in the ilmihal. The ilmihal tradition overall argues that there is almost a consensus among Muslim scholars that the four Sunni schools of law are the only true and legitimate ways

to follow. Bilmen, in his *ilmihal*, assumes in fact that Turks are followers of the Hanafi legal school, and so he explains religious issues in terms of its methods and interpretations. While giving the fullest treatment and most extensive appraisal to the founder of the Hanafi school, Abu Hanifa, Bilmen outlines the significance and greatness of the founders of the four Sunni schools from a moral and intellectual point of view (Bilmen, 1996). If it is necessary to compare views on a particular topic, only those of other Sunni schools were used. There is a total disregard for other Islamic sects such as Shia. It seems, therefore, it is arguable that the *ilmihal* tries to give the impression that there is one accurate and final view about any Islamic issue; and further that this may lead to the denial of the possibility of other options in Islam. In reality, the existence of different degrees of diversity in religious traditions is a historical fact for every religion including Islam. In this, Islam is not exceptional. It is important to note a possible implication of holding the attitude, consciously or not, that there is only one legitimate interpretation of Islam: such a view might cause stagnation in Islamic thought. Atay (1995) has suggested that one reason for Islamic stagnation is the practice of looking at Islam and the main Islamic sources only through the eyes of the scholars of Islamic jurisprudence. If we understand Islam according to the Qur'an, rather than the narrow ways of scholar jurists alone, we can achieve a new religious mentality that helps to solve some of the problems of our age. In other words, it would not be wrong to assume that the chief authority in the *ilmihal*-centred approach is particularly the *ulema* (Islamic scholars) of jurisprudence.

As a consequence of the aforementioned attitude in Turkish religious understanding, the religious education course follows a similar pattern. The majority of religious topics, such as the five pillars of Islam, has been presented in line with a particular Islamic legal school, that of the Hanafis. Furthermore, just as the state has tried to conceal the fact of religious disagreement as far as possible by using Islam as a factor in support of national unity and a counter balance to the destabilising effects of modernisation problems; so too in religious education the policy has been to avoid all mention of controversial themes (Wielandt, 1993).

New Developments in Religious Education in Schools

The primary religious education curriculum, introduced in 2000, can be considered a significant shift from traditional religious understanding to modern religious education. The new religious education curriculum argues that the former religious education curriculum did not incorporate new developments both in educational sciences and in the religious (Islamic) understanding of the Turkish society. The new curriculum is designed to respond to new changes and challenges in religious understanding and in pedagogy. This new religious education approach has been called the 'Ankara Model' by the preparation committee (Dogan & Altaş, 2004). The reason for the choice of this name may stem from the fact that the members of the new religious education curriculum committee mainly work in, or are closely associated with, the University of Ankara. It should be noted that scholars from

the faculty of theology, particularly religious educationalists, have played a more pioneering role than ever before during the process of preparation of this curriculum. Two main features of this new RE model can be explained in terms of the Ankara Model.

Firstly, in the last two decades, Turkish theologians have produced scholarly studies that make a critical evaluation of the traditional understanding of religion and Islam. Using this approach, the Ankara style promotes critical thought about religious inheritance: and also retains a sense of the importance of the traditional experience of the religious culture. Moreover, it is claimed by the committee members that this approach supports the Qur'an-centred approach in the teaching of Islam rather than an ilmihal-centred approach. Pupils have direct access to the primary source of Islam, the Holy Qur'an, and get an opportunity to study their religious cultural heritage. The Ankara model advocates that the teachings of non-Islamic religions are introduced to the students on the basis of scientific knowledge about these religions. The new primary religious education curriculum tries to identify a common understanding of religion in society to avoid having to deal with controversial issues and diversity in Islam (Dogan & Altaş, 2004; Tosun, 2003).

Secondly, this new model argues that various new religious education approaches have been developed to take into account changes in educational science, society, and religious understanding. Since Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state, the model suggests that the new religious education curriculum should reflect more accurately these features. It understands religious education as 'inclusive religious teaching'. Some basic features of inclusive religious teaching can be listed as follows: non-denominational, inclusive of non-Islamic religions, and (recognising that Islam is part of Turkish culture) incorporating an emphasis on the cultural dimension of Islam. Such teaching also promotes problem or learner centred teaching rather than content-centred teaching (Dogan & Altaş, 2004).

This new understanding of religious education is exemplified in the presentation of Christianity in the new primary religious education curriculum. Firstly, the ilmihal-centred approach in religious education, as stated above, used a classification system that divides religions by origin (whether divine or non-divine); then subdivides divinely originated religions into distorted and undistorted religions. In this taxonomy, Christianity was considered as a distorted divinely originated religion. From the beginning, this indicates prejudice against Christianity. This kind of classification of religions cannot be detected in the new textbooks. Hence, this kind of approach can be considered a significant positive step for the understanding of Christianity and other world religions. Secondly, we find that the space given to non-Islamic religions in the new curriculum and textbooks is increased considerably. Thirdly, in discussing ethical issues and presenting ethical values, the new textbooks refer to and quote from the other Scriptures, including the Bible as well as the Qur'an. Fourthly, in contrast to the old textbooks, the new textbooks give some references to contemporary issues such as Christmas and missionary works. For example, while the activities of missionaries have been discussed recently in

Turkish media from several aspects, these textbooks present them in a descriptive and objective manner (Kaymakcan, 2003).

Conclusion

Religious education in schools is a sensitive issue in Turkey. Since the establishment of the Turkish republic, the status of religious education has been discussed in different contexts. Turkey has a very distinctive experience of religious education in schools: one that includes both the complete non-existence of religious education and the existence of compulsory religious education. After the subject gained compulsory status, discussions about its quality in schools came to the fore. The traditional ilmihal-centred approach has made a great impact on Turkish religious education in schools. This traditional approach is confessional, informative, educationally weak, and theological; it attempts to be consistent with the Turkish state's secular policy.

Almost all Turkish experts on religious education agree that the traditional way of teaching religions in schools is inadequate to meet the needs of pupils in society. However, although these experts criticise and find in it (the traditional teaching) many deficiencies, they at the moment cannot reach an agreement about an alternative way of teaching religion in schools. In the meanwhile, despite some shortcomings such as not providing religious diversity in religion, becoming too eclectic from the pedagogical point of view, and giving too much emphasis on the cognitive aspects of religion (while ignoring the affective dimension in theory and modelling), the Ankara model can be considered a new insight in terms of pluralistic and educational religious education in schools. However, it is too soon to predict what the Ankara model's future will be within religious education. In 2005 the Turkish Ministry of Education announced that all the school curriculum subjects will be changed in line with constructive learning theory. The future changes in curriculum of religious education in schools should be seen as part of significant shift in the pedagogical aspects of the whole of school education.

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DEFINING AND PROMOTING THE STUDY OF RELIGION IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN SCHOOLS

Bruce Grelle

California State University, Chico

Introduction

Robert Jackson has noted that ‘the histories of religion and state relationships and of civil religion in different countries are key factors in shaping policy for the study of religions in the education systems of particular states’ (Jackson, 2005, p. 8). One of the most obvious indications of these historical, cultural, and legal differences can be found in the different names that are used to describe the study of religion in British and American schools. (FN1) ‘Religious education’ or ‘RE’ has become the agreed upon name for the subject matter in Britain and much of the rest of Europe, although this term encompasses a wide range of sometimes conflicting approaches to understanding the nature and aims of the study of religion in state-supported schools. Meanwhile, debate about how to describe the academic study of religion in public educational institutions in America is ongoing. As we shall see, a number of candidates for naming this discipline and subject-matter have been put forward, but at least for now, ‘religious education’ is not one of them because of this phrase’s unacceptable connotations in the context of United States (U.S.) history, culture, and law. In addition to what may well in the end amount to a rather superficial difference when it comes to describing the study of religion in British and American schools, there appear to be more substantial differences when it comes to the methods and aims of teaching about religion, when it comes to definitions of ‘religious literacy,’ and when it comes to the status of religion as a recognised subject-matter in the curriculum of state-supported schools and as an area of professional specialisation for teachers. In what follows, I will briefly explore some of these differences in how the study of religion is understood and practiced in British and American education. I will also observe that, despite some superficial and some not-so-superficial differences, there are

interesting and sometimes surprising parallels between what Jackson identifies as the main approaches to religious education and plurality in Britain (Jackson, 2004a) and corresponding approaches to religion and public education in the United States.

What's in a Name?

Argument over how to describe the academic study of the world's religions in public educational institutions in the United States is ongoing. In state colleges and universities, 'religious studies' has become the most common name for academic programs and departments devoted to the cross-cultural and historical study of religion, though one sometimes finds 'comparative religion' or just plain 'religion' programs or departments at such institutions as well. But as many religious studies students and professors are likely to tell you, the adjective 'religious' contributes to frequent misunderstandings of the nature and aims of these 'studies.' Indeed, one of the first challenges met by students who declare a major in religious studies is to decide how they will respond to their friends and relatives when asked if they plan to become a minister, priest, monk, nun, rabbi, or imam. While some students do plan to pursue such vocations, most do not, and they must figure out how to explain why they are interested in the subject and what they are going to 'do' with it. One wonders whether the persistence of this challenge may help to explain why more students do not choose to major in the field despite the fact that high enrolments in religious studies courses by non-majors seeking to fulfil general education requirements indicate a significant interest in the subject by college students.

Professors also face their share of misconceptions about scholarship and teaching in religious studies, more than are typical for their counterparts in history, philosophy, anthropology, or psychology. Despite the widespread institutionalisation of the cross-cultural and historical study of religion in American higher education over the past several decades, there are still some university faculty members, administrators, and members of the general public who do not seem fully to grasp that religion can be studied from a non-devotional and non-theological perspective. A recurrent topic when religious studies professors 'talk shop' is the question of how best to avoid starting a long and unwanted conversation when asked 'what do you do?' by a stranger at a party or on an airplane. Similarly, professors of religious studies must still sometimes endure colleagues who describe them as the 'God squad,' or who ask why they have not prayed for a change in the weather, or who wonder which religion or denomination they 'represent.' To be sure, these remarks are often made with tongue-in-cheek, but unfortunately it has been my experience that one cannot always assume this to be the case!

So why not find an alternative name for 'religious studies'? Although 'comparative religion' has enjoyed something of a resurgence in recent years, there are some who do not feel that it adequately describes the range of theories and methods encompassed by 'religious studies,' and others remain leery of the origins of

'comparative religion' in the context of Western imperialism and of its historical associations with Christian apologetics and missionary activities (Paden, 1994; Patton & Ray, 2000; Sharpe, 1975). As for the suggestion that the name for the academic department that studies religion should simply parallel the name for the departments that study philosophy or history, one is quickly reminded of the First Amendment constraints that set the context for the study of religion in public educational institutions in the United States – while departments of philosophy 'do' philosophy as well as teach about it; and while departments of history 'practice' history; religion may not be 'done' (practised, sponsored, promoted) in the same fashion by departments of religion. The situation is even more ambiguous in public elementary and secondary schools. Many Americans, both religionists and secularists, continue to hold the mistaken belief that the controversial Supreme Court decisions dealing with prayer and public schools in the 1960s mandated the removal of all references to religion from the school environment. This is despite the fact that the Supreme Court's decision in *Abington School District v. Schempp* (1963) made a clear distinction between school-sponsored religious practices, which were found to violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, and the academic study of religion and the Bible, which was found to be consistent with First Amendment principles. As we will see, there is increasing recognition of the importance of including the topic of religion in the curriculum of public schools, but there also remains considerable confusion on the part of many teachers, parents, and members of the general public about what to teach regarding religion and how to do it. This confusion is illustrated and perhaps even caused in part by the fact that there simply is no agreed upon name or description for this subject matter in American elementary and secondary schools. Jackson (2004a) notes similar misunderstandings when it comes to 'religious education.' For example, some European educators and researchers in the fields of intercultural and human rights education have dismissed RE as a subject concerned with the propagation of a religious viewpoint. In England and in some other parts of Europe, the problem is exacerbated further by the fact that RE is an umbrella term that encompasses traditional Christian confessional and faith-based-schools approaches to the subject in addition to the more pluralistic multifaith approaches of the sort that Jackson advocates.

The simple fact is that when it comes to the study of religion in state sponsored schools, there is a problem with the adjective 'religious.' Despite the fact that in England the phrase 'religious education' originated as an alternative to traditional Christian 'religious instruction' (Jackson, 2004a), and despite the fact the 'religious studies' emerged in both the United States and Britain in order to designate an alternative to theological approaches to the study of religion in the context of higher education, the adjective 'religious' continues for many to connote a faith-based, pious, confessional, theological, or devotional way of teaching and learning. Religious education and religious studies continue to be confused with the inculcation of particular religious viewpoints. While most would agree that such a confessional approach is entirely appropriate within the context of a

religious community and its own educational institutions, a growing number of religious and non-religious parents, students, teachers, educational policy-makers, and citizens-at-large question the suitability of such an approach in state-supported schools that are increasingly populated by students from diverse cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious as well as non-religious backgrounds. As in the case of higher education, a number of alternative names for the subject in elementary and secondary schools have been suggested. The British Humanist Association has proposed renaming the subject matter 'Beliefs and Values Education.' (Jackson, 2004a). In a similar vein, Ninian Smart and Perry Glanzer have separately suggested 'worldview analysis,' and Nicholas Piediscalzi and his associates have proposed 'public education *religion* studies' (Glanzer, 2004; Piediscalzi, 1988; 1991; Smart, 1995; Will, Piediscalzi & Swyhart, 1981). Others have simply tried to combat the problem with the adjective, 'religious,' by insisting on the preposition, 'about.' In the context of public education, so this argument goes, one should always be careful to say 'teaching *about* religion,' never 'teaching religion'; always 'education *about* religion,' never 'religious education'. In this setting, the phrase, 'teaching about religion,' is understood to include 'consideration of the beliefs and practices of religions; the role of religion in history and contemporary society; and religious themes in music, art and literature' (Haynes & Thomas, 2001, p. 89).

For the time being we appear to be stuck with this terminological ambiguity. Regardless of what label we ultimately choose to describe the academic study of religion in public schools, the more important challenge we face is that of distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate ways of approaching religion and plurality in view of the unique national, cultural, and legal circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Approaches to Religion, Plurality, and 'Religious Literacy'

One of the things that Robert Jackson's *Rethinking Religious Education and Plurality* (2004a) makes clear is just how far behind Europe the United States is when it comes to theory and research on the place of religion in the curriculum of elementary and secondary education, let alone when it comes to the institutionalisation and practice of teaching about religion in public schools. For example, in England and Wales and some other parts of Europe, RE is a well-established subject matter in the curriculum and an area of professional specialisation for which teachers can become certificated. In the United States, despite the rare secondary school elective class on the Bible as Literature or the even rarer class on world religions, teaching about religion—when it happens at all—is typically incorporated within history and social studies, and most teachers in these fields have had no formal training in the academic study of religion as part of their professional preparation. History and social studies textbooks have only very recently begun to include the topic of religion and still tend to give it only minimal attention (Nord, 1995; Nord & Haynes, 1998).

Nonetheless, in the past twenty years there has been some movement in the United States toward inclusion of religion in the curriculum of public schools. During this time, both the National Council for the Social Studies (1984) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (1988) issued statements calling for more attention to be given to religion, and a recent analysis of national and state social studies standards has documented that nearly all fifty states now include the topic in some fashion or another (Douglass, 2000). Indeed, since the late 1980s something of a 'new consensus' has emerged regarding the questions of why and how study about religion should be incorporated within public schools (Beauchamp, 2002; Nord & Haynes, 1998).

This new consensus was heralded by the 1988 publication, 'Religion in the Public School Curriculum: Questions and Answers,' a statement of principles endorsed by a remarkably broad range of educational, religious, and civic organisations (Reprinted in Haynes & Thomas, 2001, pp. 87–92). This statement recognised that knowledge about religion is not only essential for understanding history, culture, and society in the United States and around the world, it is also an integral part of education for democratic citizenship in a pluralistic society. Not only is there a growing consensus about why the topic of religion should be included in the curriculum, there is also significant agreement regarding basic pedagogical guidelines for *how* to teach about religion in public schools. Rooted in the religious liberty principles of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, these guidelines reflect current law regarding religion and public education, and they have been distributed to every public school in the nation by the United States Department of Education (Beauchamp, 2002). At the foundation of these guidelines is a sharp distinction between teaching *about* religion in public schools on the one hand, and the promotion of religion or religious indoctrination on the other hand. According to the guidelines,

- The school's approach to religion is *academic*, not *devotional*.
- The school strives for student *awareness* of religions, but does not press for student *acceptance* of any religion.
- The school sponsors *study* about religion, not the *practice* of religion.
- The school may *expose* students to a diversity of religious views, but may not *impose* any particular view.
- The school *educates* about all religions, it does not *promote* or *denigrate* religion.
- The school *informs* students about various beliefs; it does not seek to *conform* students to any particular belief (Reprinted in Haynes & Thomas, 2001, pp. 75–76).

While these consensus guidelines do not provide a full-fledged theoretical and pedagogical framework on a par with those discussed by Jackson, they do suggest a general orientation to the study of religion that can be related to approaches in England and Wales.

Jackson's (2004a) *Rethinking Religious Education and Plurality* analyses several major approaches to RE: the traditional Christian confessional approach; the faith-based-schools approach; the personal narrative approach; the religious literacy

approach; the interpretive approach; and the dialogical approach. He also discusses what might be described as a secularist 'anti-approach' to RE, which advocates that RE be relegated to faith-based education and eliminated from all other state-supported schools. Although we cannot go into it here, it is interesting to observe that several of these approaches to RE in Britain have rough counterparts in the United States. For example, the approach to religion and public education advocated by such American groups as the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools and David Barton's 'Wallbuilders' organisation parallels the traditional Christian confessional approach in Britain. In each case there is the view that state-supported schools should respond to the increasing secularisation of society and to the burgeoning diversity of religious viewpoints and communities by transmitting a nostalgic version of the nation's Christian heritage. (Baptist Joint Committee, n.d.; Levenson, 2002; Miller, 1995; National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools, n.d.; Schaeffer & Minceberg, 2000; Wallbuilders, n.d.) Similarly, there is a parallel between the faith-based-schools approach in England and the movement for school vouchers in the United States, which would direct public funds to private religious schools.

Of the major approaches discussed in Jackson's 2004 book, the American consensus approach most closely resembles what he describes as a 'family' of pluralistic approaches to multifaith RE that includes the religious literacy, interpretive, and dialogical approaches. Like these, the American consensus approach stands outside any particular system of religious beliefs and adopts an inclusive response to plurality. (Jackson, 2004b). That is, it seeks to promote understanding of the religious and non-religious worldviews of others, and it assumes that 'no one should be marginalised from the subject because their position is conservative or radical, secular or religious...' (Jackson, 2004a, p. 86). Religion is not approached as self-evident or publicly agreed truth, but as a form of knowledge or way of seeing the world and as a distinctive area of human experience. Like the British approaches to multifaith RE that emerged in the 1970s, the primary aim of teaching about religion in American public schools has been to increase pupils' understanding of different religions in history and society. A closely related aim has been to increase tolerance and sensitivity toward people of different faiths as well as toward those who are affiliated with no particular religious faith (Jackson, 1997).

Yet despite these similarities, what most clearly distinguishes the American approach from these British approaches is its insistence on the sharp distinction between teaching *about* religion on the one hand, and religious 'nurture' or 'edification' on the other hand. To be sure, this distinction is recognised by the religious literacy, interpretive, and dialogical approaches to RE, but it is intentionally blurred. For these three approaches, multifaith RE is not only about understanding others, it is also concerned with relating material studied in class to students' own beliefs and assumptions; it is concerned with helping young people to clarify and develop their own views and beliefs (Jackson, 1997) and with the development of their own religious or spiritual identities (Jackson, 2004a). As Jackson writes in *Religious education: An interpretive approach*,

From the perspective of religious education theory, the research challenges the sharp distinction generally made between religious education and religious nurture. The current orthodoxy...was to draw a sharp distinction between religious education (non-dogmatic and with the aim of increasing understanding) and religious nurture, a term used...to connote the transmission of religious culture from one generation to the next within faith traditions....[R]eligious nurture was perceived as 'confessional' while religious education was presented as 'educational' (Jackson, 1997, p. 4).

It is important to understand that religious nurture and edification are not the same thing as indoctrination or the inculcation of particular religious beliefs. Pluralistic approaches to multifaith RE in Britain are no more aiming to convert or indoctrinate students than the American consensus approach is. But a persistent theme in the RE literature is the question of whether and how religious education and religious nurture – the transmission of religious culture – might complement one another (Jackson, 1997). These British approaches both acknowledge and cultivate a connection between 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion, with the result that 'religious understanding' becomes 'simultaneously academic and personal.' (Wright, as cited in Jackson, 2004a). More specifically, Jackson discusses the potential role of RE in the 'edification' of students. He stresses the inevitable relationship that exists between students' own experiences and the experiences of those whose beliefs, values, and ways of life they are attempting to understand:

Thus the activity of grasping another's way of life is inseparable in practice from that of pondering on the issues and questions raised by it. Such reflective activity is personal to the student. Teachers cannot delay the process of reflection to a later date, just as they cannot guarantee that it will happen. They can, however, enable it by providing structured opportunities for reflection ... (Jackson, 1997, p. 130).

On this view, RE is potentially transformative of the student's own religious self-understanding, and a good bit of attention is devoted to how RE teachers can 'enable' such transformations. Engagement in 'conversations' with different worldviews and ways of life sometimes leads students to reassess their own worldviews and ways of life. 'To be edified, in this sense, is to be taken out of one's own self. Through the challenge of 'unpacking' another worldview one can, in a sense, become a new person' (Rorty as cited in Jackson, 1997, p. 130–131; cf. Jackson, 2004b). Thus, as Jackson sees it, the promotion of 'religious literacy' involves efforts 'to help each pupil to identify with and argue for a particular religious or non-religious position' and to help students 'find their own positions within the key debates about religious plurality' (Jackson, 2005, p. 6). This goal is shared not only by the 'religious literacy' approach per se, but by the 'interpretive' and 'dialogical' approaches as well.

In contrast, teaching about religion in American public schools cannot be geared toward students' religious edification and nurture—even a non-traditional and

pluralistic form of religious nurture—because the First Amendment requires public schools to be neutral toward religion. This not only means that they may not promote or denigrate any *particular* religious faith, but also that they may not promote or discourage religious faith *in general*. Apart from this legal barrier to the inclusion of ‘existential’ or ‘spiritual’ aims as a component of religious literacy, there are cultural ones as well. I think that Warren Nord is right to suggest that while Jackson’s view of the potentially transformative implications of study about religion may be acceptable when it comes to secondary schools and undergraduate education, in the United States ‘there would be powerful resistance to any public profession that the purpose of education in elementary schools is to redefine religious identities’ (Nord, 2005, p. 13). Indeed, it has been my own experience that there is often parental resistance to such a notion even at the level of secondary education.

In the setting of American public schools, when the term is used at all, ‘religious literacy’ most typically refers to a student’s mastery of certain basic information about the world’s religions, and as such it tends to be viewed as a dimension or component of a broader conception of cultural and historical literacy. While there is a growing literature in the United States on education and spirituality, much of it relates to post-secondary education or to private rather than public schools (see for example, Blacher-Wilson, 2004; Denton, 2004; Hulett, 2004). Thus, for the time being, the inclusion of this ‘existential’ or ‘spiritual’ aim as a component of religious literacy in Britain and its exclusion in the United States is one of the most significant differences between the study of religion in British and American schools.

Interpretation, Representation, and Reflexivity

At this point I think we can begin to see that the American consensus approach to the study of religion in public schools more closely resembles what Jackson describes as the ‘phenomenological’ or ‘world religions’ approach than it does any of the other major approaches discussed so far. While Jackson’s 2004 book mentions the phenomenological approach only in passing, he analyses it at great length in his earlier work, *Religious education: An interpretive approach* (Jackson, 1997).

Within the British context, the phenomenological approach is most closely identified with Ninian Smart and the 1970s Lancaster Schools Council Project (Jackson, 1997). Like the American consensus approach, this approach sees the primary aim of education about religion as the promotion of understanding. ‘It uses the tools of scholarship in order to enter into an empathic experience of the faith of individuals and groups’ (Schools Council, as cited in Jackson, 1997, p. 8). Jackson notes that an influential British government report has advocated the phenomenological approach as the most appropriate one for a democratic and pluralistic society, because it seeks ‘to teach children to understand the nature of beliefs and a range of belief systems...and to ‘inform’ rather than ‘convert’ pupils.’ (Swann, as cited in

Jackson, 1997, p. 9) In words reminiscent of the American consensus statements, this government report states that

It is...the function of the school [*as distinct from home and community*] to assist pupils to understand the nature of religion and to know something of the diversity of belief systems, their significance for individuals and how these bear on the community (Swann, 1985, cited in Jackson, 1997, p. 9. Words in parentheses added by Jackson).

Jackson is generally sympathetic to the phenomenological approach. Even though his own approach is more directly influenced by recent work in interpretive anthropology and ethnography, he acknowledges that it shares some features in common with the 'new style' phenomenology of Dutch scholar Jacques Waardenburg (Jackson, 1997, 2004b).

Nonetheless, when it comes to issues of *representation*, *interpretation*, and *reflexivity* in the study of religion, Jackson believes that both the phenomenological and religious literacy approaches exhibit some significant weaknesses, and I believe that the American consensus approach suffers from these weaknesses as well, if not necessarily in principle then at least in terms of current classroom practice. While it is not possible here to do justice to Jackson's thoroughgoing discussion of these issues, I do want to suggest why it is important for American educators to give them more attention than they typically have done up until now.

First, with respect to the issue of reflexivity—the issue of 'being aware of one's own self and personal and social understandings in interpreting the testimony of someone from another way of life' (Jackson, 1997, p. 30)—we have already noted what Jackson regards as the negative pedagogical implications of asking students and teachers to 'bracket' their own personal religious identities and existential questions. By striving for an objective and neutral approach to the study of religion that sets aside one's own presuppositions, experiences, and questions, there is great risk of undermining students' sense of the relevance of the subject matter and its connection to their own personal lives. This pedagogical challenge of making the subject matter 'come alive' for students is exacerbated in the United States where many believe that techniques such as role-playing and simulations in connection with the topic of religion are to be discouraged in public schools (see Council on Islamic Education, 2003; Hill, 2004). As we have seen, the legal and cultural situation in the United States is such that the study of religion in public schools cannot be approached primarily from the perspective of students' and teachers' own personal religious narratives and experiences. While there is considerable latitude for student religious expression in the school environment, current law allows much less latitude for religious expression on the part of teachers, and in the context of the school curriculum both students and teachers are to approach religion in an 'academic' rather than an 'existential' manner (see Haynes & Thomas, 2001, pp. 113–132). Clearly, there needs to be more attention given to how the subject matter can be connected to the lives and experiences of students without violating the spirit of objectivity and neutrality that is so critical in the American setting.

I believe that one way to make this personal connection is to focus more directly and explicitly on the linkage between knowledge about the world's religions and exercise of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a pluralistic democracy, and I will return to this issue below.

Besides these pedagogical challenges, there are deeper theoretical issues that are raised in connection with the issue of reflexivity. Jackson (1997, pp. 49–55) is troubled by many religious educators' lack of critical attention to how Western ideas about religion in general, and about separate 'world religions' in particular, have been formed. He reminds us of the specific historical and cultural circumstances in which the concepts of 'religion' and 'religions' originated and developed, and he notes that in the process of bracketing or setting aside presuppositions it is easy to lose sight of the extent to which one's own terminology and systems of classification may be inappropriately transposed from one context to another. The study of religion in schools still too often amounts to taking such Western and Christian concepts as God, salvation, revelation, sacrifice, prayer, and saviour and looking for their equivalents in 'other' religions. As Jackson (1997, pp. 55–57) explains, the issue here is not simply the potential for misunderstanding the material that one is studying, there is also an issue of the relationship between knowledge and power. Too often our taken-for-granted assumptions have originated in the context of unjust patterns of power and authority and have been used to legitimate and perpetuate these same patterns; too often they have conveyed inaccurate images of religions and cultures; too often they have perpetuated stereotypes of ourselves and others. Jackson's insistence on greater conceptual and methodological self-consciousness and self-criticism in the study of religion on the part of both teachers and students is certainly as applicable in the United States as it is in Britain.

With regard to the *representation* and *interpretation* of religions and cultures in history and contemporary society, Jackson (1997) faults both the phenomenological and the religious literacy approaches for their tendency to portray religions as whole, discrete, and relatively stable systems of belief rather than as internally diverse, fluid, and historically dynamic traditions. I fear that most teaching about religion in American public schools is susceptible to this same criticism. As Warren Nord (2005, p. 14) observes, 'American world history textbooks typically freeze world religions in their so-called classical forms, and then pretty much ignore their development over time.' Likewise, curriculum frameworks and standards tend to concentrate on the origins and basic tenets of religions and largely neglect their historical, cultural, and contemporary variations. Such static portrayals risk leaving students with the impression that religions are relics of ancient history rather than vital parts of contemporary life for millions of people around the world.

Closely related to this reified view of religions as static and clearly bounded systems of belief is a 'failure to recognise the internal plurality of religious traditions, and the diversity of discourse within them' (Jackson, 2004a, p. 83). Much teaching about religion is insufficiently attentive to 'contested representations within traditions or to disputed borders' (Jackson, 2004a, p. 81). The problem with this is that 'idiosyncrasy' and 'hybridity' are filtered out; 'the fuzzy edges of real life

are trimmed off, and the personal syntheses and multiple allegiances revealed by ethnographic study are interpreted as deviations from doctrinally pristine religious narratives' (Jackson, 2004a, pp. 81–82). The interpretive and dialogical approaches developed by Jackson and his colleagues at the University of Warwick have sought to overcome this problem by focusing not only on historical representations of religious beliefs and practices, but also on case studies of contemporary religious cultures and sub-cultures as well as on pupils' experiences of religion (or its absence) in their own lives and in the lives of those around them. Increased use of ethnographic case studies of 'living' religious communities is something that I think would be entirely appropriate when teaching about religion in American public schools.

Here we return to the question of how the study of religion might be made relevant to the personal lives of students. If teaching geared toward the religious nurture and edification of students is inappropriate in the United States, how else might we cultivate a personal connection with the subject matter? It has been my own experience working with American college students that they are very curious about the religious and cultural diversity they encounter in their own communities and in the media. Many elementary and secondary school teachers with whom I have worked confirm that their pupils are also interested in the diversity they see around them. By focusing on living religious communities—beliefs, customs, ceremonies, holidays, styles of dress and artistic expression, patterns of family life, etc.—it is possible to make the subject matter come alive for students, not so much in the context of developing their own spiritual identities but in the context of developing their identities as citizens of a pluralistic democracy. Teaching about diverse religious and secular worldviews and ways of life becomes a venue for helping students understand their rights to religious liberty or freedom of conscience as well as their responsibility to protect those same rights for their fellow citizens. By learning about and engaging the differences between religions and cultures in contemporary society as well as in history, students come to understand and cultivate the spirit of respectfulness and civility that is essential for participation in the ongoing conversations, arguments, and debates that constitute public life in a democratic society. Such a view of the aims of teaching about religion in public schools is the basis of 3 Rs Projects (Rights, Responsibility, Respect) in California and Utah (see Haynes & Thomas, 2001, p. 63) and is very much in keeping with Jackson's observations regarding the contributions that RE can make to citizenship education (Jackson, 2004a).

Conclusion

Robert Jackson's discussions of representation, interpretation, and reflexivity in the study of religion are situated not only in the context of recent educational research, but also in the context of contemporary debates within social and cultural anthropology and religious studies. While issues and debates such as these are at the very heart of recent scholarship and teaching in religious studies in the context

of American higher education, they are, with few exceptions, all but absent from discussions of teaching about religion in public elementary and secondary schools. Indeed, as Warren Nord muses, it almost seems like an idle luxury to worry about such issues in the American context where students are lucky to be exposed to even the most basic information about the world's religions, let alone to careful accounts of historical change, internal diversity, and reflexivity (see Nord, 2005, p. 14). For all the progress over the past twenty years, teaching about religion is still peripheral to most teacher education programs and still insufficiently integrated into the curriculum of most public schools. Discussions of religion and public education in the United States are still in an early phase of development, and it will likely be a long time before they achieve the level of theoretical and methodological self-consciousness and sophistication, backed-up by extensive empirical research, that characterises discussions of the topic in Britain and some of the rest of Europe.

Having said this, however, let me conclude by acknowledging some bright spots on the horizon. I just mentioned that, *with few exceptions*, the sorts of theoretical and pedagogical issues addressed by Jackson are all but absent from discussions of teaching about religion in American schools. But the exceptions are significant. The Program in Religion and Secondary Education at Harvard Divinity School (n.d.), and more recently, the Religion and Public Education Resource Centre at California State University, Chico (n.d.) have pioneered the incorporation of these issues in teacher education. The National Endowment for the Humanities has sponsored periodic institutes and seminars on religion for teachers seeking opportunities for professional development in this area, and organisations such as Religious Studies in Secondary Schools (n.d.) and the Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education (n.d.), though made up primarily of teachers from private independent and religious schools where religious studies is an established subject matter in the curriculum, have nonetheless developed many curricular and pedagogical resources that might be usefully adapted to the public school setting. The work of the First Amendment Centre and its 3 Rs Projects has strengthened the connection between the study of religion and civic education and has advanced public understanding of constitutionally appropriate and educationally sound ways of dealing with religion in the public schools. Along with the ongoing publication of the journal *Religion & Education* (<http://fp.uni.edu/jrae/>), there is a growing body of scholarship devoted to advancing the discussion of religion and public education in the United States. (Fraser, 1999; Gaddy, Hall & Marzano, 1996; Haynes & Thomas, 2001; Marty & Moore, 2000; Nash, 1999; Nord, 1995; Nord & Haynes, 1998; Piediscalzi, 1988, 1991; Sears & Carper, 1988). And finally, the American Academy of Religion's formation of a Religion in the Schools Task Force (n.d.) indicates an increasing commitment on the part of college- and university-based scholars to engage in conversation and collaboration with school teachers regarding the unique challenges presented by the study of religion in elementary and secondary schools. This task force sponsored a panel on 'Rethinking Religious Education and Plurality in Europe and the United States' at the American Academy of Religion's annual meeting in 2004, and this panel provided the basis for a special focus section in *Religion &*

Education in Spring 2005. Hopefully this is only the beginning of a more sustained interaction and dialogue between American educators and their British and other European counterparts regarding the study of religion in state-supported schools.

Acknowledgement

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Notes

In this essay I consider Robert Jackson's work, which addresses recent developments in religious education in England and Wales. As he points out, Scotland and Northern Ireland have different systems. When I use the terms 'Britain' and 'British' for ease of expression, I am referring specifically to the English and Welsh developments addressed by Jackson.

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TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION AT SCHOOL IN FRANCE

Mireille Estivalèzes

Historian and Sociologist of Religions

Introduction

France stands apart from other European countries in the twenty-first century in that it does not provide religious instruction in school. Since laws on the laicisation of education were adopted at the end of the nineteenth century, it is no longer possible to carry out religious instruction during school hours and on school premises. Yet 100 years after such laws were introduced, we are seeing the beginning of a social debate on the lack of religious knowledge among young people and the means of correcting this. Although this does not entail reintroducing religious instruction, there is an urgent need to provide students with better information on religions both to support them in their lives as citizens and to provide them with a more balanced education.

Before going any further, ‘teaching about religion’—a term, more and more used in social debate, and now the accepted term—needs to be defined. ‘Religion’ here refers to a social matter, a human reality, within a historical and geographical context. ‘Teaching about’ points to a scientific, that is to say an academic approach to study. Teaching about religion is therefore a subject of knowledge, a means of understanding civilizations and societies. What distinguishes it is that it restricts itself to what can be observed: ‘Fact is an irrefutable starting point. Buddhism arrived in Japan in the eighteenth century, it is a fact. Muslims believe that Muhammad was sent from God and that the Koran is uncreated, it is also a fact (Debray, 2002b, p. 173). This approach has the advantage that religion, being considered as part of culture, is then studied within the field of existing subject areas. However, the problem with this view is that it can reduce religion only to what can be observed, such as rites, architecture, social gatherings without taking symbolic and spiritual dimensions into account.

Before showing how religion is considered by the French education system, and mentioning the possible problems of teaching this subject, it is worthwhile recalling,

on the one hand, the French lay context and, on the other, the major stages of reflection on this issue, which have been accelerating over the last fifteen years.

The French Context

Within the process of the historical construction of laicity (French: *laïcité*) (Baubérot, 1990, 2004), the laicisation of education was one of the first manifestations of the political will of the Third French Republic in its desire to laicise civil society; this precedes by several years the separation of the Churches and the State instituted by the law of 12 December 1905.

This educational laicity took place in two steps and on two levels: at programme level and at staff level. While Jules Ferry was Minister for Public Instruction, the law of 16 June 1881 made primary schooling free; the law of 28 March 1882 made it compulsory and lay. Religious instruction was then removed from the curriculum. However, it was henceforth provided outside school hours and outside school premises and one day per week was set aside for children to receive religious instruction. Within the school, this subject was replaced by lessons on moral and civic instruction.

The law of 30 October 1886 states that in primary schools ‘teaching is exclusively carried out by lay staff’ (Estivalèzes, 2005b, p. 226). The religious neutrality of the content of teaching, just like that of teachers themselves, was stressed. Teachers at primary and secondary level were henceforth obliged to be neutral in terms of philosophy, religion and politics; they could neither preach nor systematically criticize religions, but had to respect their students’ freedom of conscience.

Religious instruction, considered now as a private matter, was then handed over to priests and the family. The above mentioned laws were, therefore, not anti-religious—for one of the concerns of Jules Ferry was to enable children and parents to exercise their religious freedom, yet not within the context of school—but their aim was rather to separate the public sphere from the private sphere.

Although laicity confined religious convictions to the private, family or parish sphere, it did not prohibit the discussion of religious issues within the context of school subjects. It would appear impossible to study the history of societies and civilizations or to approach major literary texts without mentioning religions. Furthermore, from 1908 onwards, one of Jules Ferry’s close colleagues, Ferdinand Buisson, wanted the history of religions to be taught firstly in French universities, in particular to research students, and secondly in schools, to enable students to understand better the history of civilizations and to encourage ‘a wide-ranging friendship, a respectful admiration for all manifestations of thought and of conscience’, and also to combat contempt and intolerance (Buisson, as cited in Gauthier, 1991).

However, it has to be pointed out that France has witnessed some major upheavals over the past thirty years. First of all, in the field of education, teachers have experienced a crisis in the humanities that provide, alongside classical Graeco-Latin culture and literary culture, knowledge about religion: a decline in the transmission of general education. Secondly, in the context of religion, there is a crisis in the social

frameworks for transmitting religion (a decline in religious practices; a decrease in the number of children attending lessons on religious instruction; a breakdown in the transmission of religion within the family) that has resulted in a significant religious deculturation of French society. Together, these two crises are largely responsible for the absence of a religious culture evident in young people.

History of a Debate

We are not concerned here with a detailed description of the issue, but only with some of the landmarks of the debate on teaching about religion in school. It was during the 1980s, through the press in particular, that genuine concern was voiced by various participants in the education system about the lack of religious culture among students. In particular, teachers found it impossible to conduct classes in which their students had to approach a certain number of literary, historical, philosophical or artistic topics, because their students did not have the necessary cultural references. This absence of religious culture, which seems to run deep, affected young people's approach to their religious affiliation, whatever their level of education, in secondary schools or universities. It has quite simply become more and more difficult for teachers to work with their students. How in literature can one read and appreciate Pascal, Racine, *Tartuffe* or *Don Juan* by Moliere, Victor Hugo, Claudel, Voltaire's attack against the Church, the poetry of Baudelaire or that of Verlaine without at least a basic knowledge of religion? How does one approach history without dealing with religion in history and, therefore, without understanding the basics of the main religions? What is the point of talking about ecclesiastical communities in the Middle Ages when students do not know what the message of Christianity is? Or how does one explore Muslim expansion if students know nothing about the main principles of Islam? How does one teach metaphysics in philosophy, if students do not know the meaning of such words as 'grace', 'faith' or 'salvation'? How does one talk to them about Descartes or Kant? It is difficult to appreciate the history of European art, architecture and music, at least until the eighteenth century, without a minimum of religious culture, whether this entails understanding medieval painting (full of passions, resurrections, Madonnas, miracles and saints), cathedrals, or sacred music such as the work of Mozart or Bach.

Opinion polls, seminars and debates from the 1980s revealed a lack of religious culture, no longer only among young people, but also in adults, including teachers. For example, the SOFRES poll for the *Encyclopaedia* (Baubérot 1990, p. 153) showed that only 15% were able to name the four evangelists in Christianity. It also indicated that a significant minority admitted to lacking religious instruction (44% in the 18/24 age group, 40% in the 25/34 age group, 38% in the 35/49 age group and 26% of those aged 65 and over). In the same survey, approximately 65% of the French were, at the end of the 1980s, highly or rather, in favour of teaching the history of religions: but there were differences in the purposes and the meaning of such teaching. For some, the objective was essentially moral (with the emphasis on transmitting values of honesty, faithfulness, etc.); and 42% thought that it would

help develop a spirit of tolerance in young people. For others, the objective was to place the subject in the wider historical and sociological context, and was therefore, by definition, highly cultural: some 35% believed it would foster the growth of general culture and 26% that it was important for young people to know their roots.

In 1988, the Ministry of National Education asked the historian Philippe Joutard to review the teaching of history, geography and the social sciences. In his report, he underlined the need to remedy the absence of religious culture by raising the profile of the history of religions in teaching about history, geography and literature, and by showing 'the importance of teaching about religion in history and its permanence in contemporary society' and by 'adding religion to cultural life and the civilization of daily life' (Joutard, 1990, p. 83).

In November 1991, a large seminar was organised at Besançon (Centre régional de documentation pédagogique, 1992) on the theme of 'A lay approach to the teaching of the history of religions', which brought together the principal social actors such as university staff, teaching experts and teachers from the private and public sectors. Its purpose was to conduct a debate on the practical methods of such teaching. What emerged was the rejection of a proposal, from some university staff, for the creation of a specific course for teaching the history of religions by a specialist which adopted an academic and lay approach towards religion, similar to the one used in the *École pratique des hautes études*. This was not acceptable to all for practical and ideological reasons. Instead, the strategy advocated was that of the acquisition of religious knowledge within existing school subject areas; and in particular of enriching the history syllabus by spending more time on the history of religions. This was to take place in the context of the reform of the curriculum to be progressively introduced in secondary schools from the start of the school year in 1996.

In 2000, an opinion poll for *Le Monde-Notre Histoire* (Estivalèzes M., 2000; Guibert, N. & Ternisien X., 2000) showed that 57% of those polled were in favour of teaching the history of religion (a decrease of 8% compared to 1988). Some 74% of these thought that it would improve the students' general level of education, and 69% their spirit of tolerance (a significant increase in comparison with 1988). This did give rise to some concerns however: 51% feared that it would create tension on the school premises, and 46% that this course would be a threat to the spirit of laicism.

The events of 11 September 2001 had an immediate impact on schools in as much as teachers were overwhelmed by questions from their students on religions and fundamentalisms. The Minister of National Education entrusted the philosopher Régis Debray with the task of investigating the state of teaching about religion in the lay school system, and putting forward some proposals. He presented his conclusions in March 2002. Following up reports about the absence of religious culture and the crisis in classical culture and the humanities, he believed that, beyond the concept of heritage, it was necessary to provide the means of understanding contemporary society. He concluded that teachers of the subject areas concerned—history, literature, philosophy and languages—needed to be better trained and

informed at the academic, intellectual and teaching method levels. He stressed the difference between religion as a cultural influence, ‘under the responsibility of Public Instruction, which is obliged to examine the contribution of various religions to the symbolic institution of humanity’, and religion as an object of worship ‘requiring a personal act of will, within the context of private associations’ (Debray, 2002a, p. 28). He also called for a ‘laicity of incompetence (i.e. religion does not concern us) to become a laicity of intelligence (i.e. it is our duty to understand it) (Debray, 2002a, p. 43). He concluded with twelve recommendations, including the creation of a module for teachers during their early training on ‘the philosophy of laicity and teaching about religion’ (Debray, 2002a, pp. 50–51). He also proposed improving the in-service training of teachers and advocated the creation of a European Institute for Religious Studies.

There is general agreement now in France about the necessity of taking the teaching about religion into consideration. As such, the Stasi Commission offers a ‘reasonable approach to religion as a fact of civilization’ (Stasi, 2004, p. 137) in order to give a better understanding of different cultures. Recently, in February 2005, when there was political debate about the law for the future of the school, Jean-Pierre Brard, a communist deputy, proposed a text dealing with how to organise the teaching of religion at school which, he argued, is ‘necessary to understand the existing world and enables access to culture and the arts’ (Estivalèzes, 2005a, p. 305). This amendment was approved by nearly all the deputies.

The Issues in Such Teaching

There is consensus around three principal objectives for improving the status of teaching about religions in schools – objectives that had remained more or less the same since the start of the social debate.

Access to the Cultural Heritage and its Symbolism

To remedy the absence of religious culture already identified, information must be provided for a better understanding of religions, and this applies as much to religious buildings—churches, cathedrals, monasteries, synagogues, mosques—as to painting, sculpture, stained-glass windows or a musical requiem. French society bears the traces of a deeply Christian past, in particular through its many artistic expressions (architecture, painting, music, literature, etc.), but also through the reference points of life in society (the calendar, public holidays, etc.). Yet for young people, the religious and symbolic dimension of this cultural heritage has now become to a certain extent incomprehensible.

Schools could play an important role in making the Western cultural heritage accessible to contemporary young people by providing them with the necessary keys to understand it. As religions are full of symbols, this also entails helping students to think in terms of these symbols, a process with which they are generally unfamiliar.

To Develop Education of Tolerance

French society is multicultural and pluri-confessional. Islam is its second religion in terms of the number of the faithful (about 4 to 5 millions registered); there are also large Jewish communities (600,000 people) or Buddhists (500,000 followers, 1 million supporters). It is very often the case that, at best, we do not understand, and at worst, we are unaware of, we criticise or we misunderstand those with whom we are unfamiliar. Yet schools should extend exactly the same welcome to children of different cultural religious and ideological backgrounds. It is the ideal place where mutual respect is learned, starting with mutual knowledge, in keeping with article 26.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948: 'Education shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups.'

Faced with the risk of intolerance, schools would seem to have an important role to play. They could defuse religious issues, promote better and greater understanding, and therefore educate tolerance by means of a cultural and social approach to religions, mainly Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism.

This could facilitate greater integration of minorities, alleviate tensions, promote respect for consciences and differences, and promote meetings and dialogue. It is also consistent with one of the main priorities of the French Ministry of National Education, which is to reassert the value of citizenship education.

To Promote Understanding of the Contemporary World

Another challenge is to better understand what is happening in the world, which, in our age, mainly due to globalisation and the media, is not limited to what is happening in our immediate vicinity—the events of 11 September 2001 and their consequences being a recent example.

Regularly, if not daily, we are reminded how important religions are in world affairs, in particular in the field of geopolitics. However, most of the time the media only mention religions in the case of spectacular, often violent events (the conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians; Muslim fundamentalist terrorism: confrontations between Hindus and Muslims; the troubles in Northern Ireland). Such accounts ignore historical and cultural contexts and so often do not help us understand the events.

Schools could promote a better understanding of the world and of our societies. For instance, the history of the Jewish people and certain episodes from the Bible as well as the fact that Jerusalem has been a holy city for Muslims for centuries would shed light on some of the religious issues in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. If students were given details about the differences between Sunnites and Shiites, they would then perhaps better appreciate the complexity of the Muslim world today, which is far from unitary. If the religious history of the United States of America were explained, we could better understand certain ways of American thinking.

Teaching About Religion in Secondary Programmes

Aspects of teaching about religion are present in the French secondary school curriculum, mainly within history, but also in literature and philosophy. The aims of history programmes are

- intellectual: to contribute to the way we learn;
- civic: to help develop citizenship by encouraging knowledge and understanding of the contemporary world;
- in terms of heritage and culture: to build upon a heritage which the present population will inherit, and also by the same token to enable them to belong to a culture.

In lower secondary school, apart Egyptian and Greek mythologies, the programme includes the Hebrews as a people from the Bible, as well as the origins of Christianity. Links with the French-language programme are reinforced through the study of fundamental texts (the *Odyssey*, the Old and New Testaments, the *Aeneid*). Other studies include: Orthodox Christianity; the Muslim world; mediaeval Western Christendom (including the role of the Church); the Protestant and Catholic reforms; divisions between Catholics and Protestants in Christian Europe; the Age of Enlightenment; and the laicisation of societies.

These are not new topics as they already existed in earlier programmes. They are now accompanied by recommendations which insist on the need to take into consideration the historical dimension of Jewish and Christian religions, and to study heritage documents, both literary (such as the Bible or the works of Homer), and architectural (such as cathedrals or mosques), or artistic (such as paintings). Further, it is stressed that these are not merely illustrations, but rather integral parts of the programme (Estivalèzes, 2005a, p. 108).

At upper secondary school, where one of the aims of teaching history is urban integration, the programme for 15- to 16-year olds is devoted to the study of six historical moments marking the development of contemporary civilization, which we have inherited, including: the origins and spread of Christianity; the Mediterranean in the twelfth century; the crossroads of three civilizations (Western Christendom, the Byzantine Empire and Islam). This latter topic has the political aim of showing that 'far from developing in isolation, a civilization is enriched by its confrontations and exchanges with other civilizations' (Dahéron, 2004). This section of the programme includes also the topics of Humanism and the Renaissance, with the influence of the Reforms. The next two years' curriculum, devoted to contemporary history, places more emphasis on the economic and social aspects rather than the religious dimension of history. Figures from religious life in Europe and North America, and the relations between Churches and the modern worlds from the middle of the nineteenth century to 1939 are explored, as is the development of beliefs in France since 1945.

Examination of these programmes suggests several comments. Firstly, it can be seen that the contexts—ancient or mediaeval—in which religions developed

are given more weight and that religions are strangely absent from contemporary history. This is particularly harmful to Judaism, reduced to the history of the Hebrews, and to Islam, limited to its first centuries. Is the intention here to think of religions (only) when linked to societies of the past? The risk would be to project a model of a highly-secularised Western society onto the rest of humanity. Secondly, the religions studied in programmes and therefore presented in school textbooks are principally those known as ‘monotheistic’. Although this is understandable at a historical level, given their importance in our past, it is highly regrettable that no mention is made of Asian religious systems—Hinduism, Buddhism or other spiritualities. The inclusion of these traditions is important for students from Asia, even if they are in the minority in France. Some currents of these spiritual traditions exert, such as Tibetan Buddhism, also fascinate some young people. Moreover, these religions play a very important role in many societies.

As regards the literature programmes, the main innovation is the explicit reference teaching about religion through an introduction to the Bible as one of the fundamental texts. These texts also include such works as the Homer’s *Odyssey* the Virgil’s *Aeneid* or Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, whose aim is to raise awareness of ‘the cultural sources of ancient heritage’, both Judeo-Christian and Greco-Latin – this being the main innovation. Implicitly, the literature programmes enable much interaction with religious fact. A significant portion of French literature is impregnated with religious references, for example, Ronsard, Agrippa d’Aubigne, Pascal, Racine, the philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment such as Voltaire, as well as the works of Nerval, Baudelaire or Mallarmé.

In philosophy, several notions such as ‘religion’, ‘truth’, ‘belief’ and ‘knowledge’ may intersect with religious issues. In the list of authors for study, there are St Augustine, Averroes and St Thomas Aquinas, as well as Descartes, Pascal, Spinoza and others.

In this brief overview, it can be seen that teaching about religion is far from absent in secondary education programmes and that there is the will to discuss religious issues seriously, with respect for laicity. This requires appropriate training of teachers.

Training of Teachers

If we are to consider the decision that was taken in France not to resort to specialists in the history of religions, but to make use of teachers in the subject areas concerned, i.e. mainly those of history, literature and philosophy, then in our opinion one of the most important issues is that of teacher training. How is the subject of religions best approached as a subject of study within the context of the curriculum? With what tools? Is such training best provided during an initial training course, for example at university? Or, in the case of serving teachers, are there training courses on religions that would enable them to update their knowledge?

The national survey that we carried out on this subject provides precise answers to such questions (Estivalèzes, 2005a). Without going into detail, it can be said,

as far as the initial training of students at university is concerned, that for many future teachers it is possible, in some universities, to take courses in the history of religions for historians (although this is always offered as an option). They can also explore the history of religions and the anthropological approach to religion. The list of religions studied includes Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. Equally, it is possible, in some literary specialities, to take courses either on biblical texts (extracts from the Old or New Testaments) or the literary inheritance of the Bible—but again, always as an option.

Students take these courses for a wide variety of reasons (Estivalèzes, 2005a, p. 175). It may be an interest in the cultural aspect of a subject about which they know little, or an anthropological interest in understanding humankind and its relationship with the sacred. Sometimes it may also be for personal reasons—some choose such courses to know and understand their own faith better because they are believers.

What is obvious is that all courses on religions are optional, and students may freely decide to take them. This means that students take them because they want to, on an optional, voluntary basis. Furthermore, the availability of these courses on religions at French universities is intrinsically linked to the academic proficiency of the teachers. These courses only exist because the teaching staff are both qualified and willing to undertake such courses. More generally, there is also the question of the place of the history of religions or religious studies and their recognition in the French university landscape, which until now was not very important.

For training active teachers there exist a certain number of initiatives:

- national or regional training sessions, sometimes lasting several years, for teachers in the public system;
- theme-oriented summer universities on teaching about the origins of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Protestantism, but also on laicity and the sociology of religion;
- and for teachers in the private system (which has the same curriculum as the public system, but has the possibility of providing religious activities) national sessions on the three monotheisms, on religion and literature, Christianity and modernity, etc.

However, once again, the decision to participate in these training courses requires a personal commitment by the teachers themselves.

This concern for ongoing training is also evident in the publication of a certain number of teaching manuals, such as the series 'History of religions' created in 1989 by the regional educational centre of Franche-Comté. It was specifically designed for teachers and contains syntheses of university knowledge, documents, as well as suggestions for teaching practice. Other publications include works on the origins of Christianity, Protestantism, Islam, the first religions of humanity, religions in the contemporary world, laicity and a volume on the scriptures of the major religions (for example, Ferjani, 1996; Lévêque & L'Huiller, 1992; Nouailhat, 1990).

Beyond the issue of teacher training, there are some theoretical and practical difficulties inherent in the teaching the history of religions (Estivalèzes, 2005a). It is not always easy to talk about religions with students since religions involve the field of the symbolic and the complex with which they are unfamiliar. Furthermore, talking about religions touches upon personal, private convictions. But a teacher is obliged, within the framework of the lay school system, to respect the freedom of conscience of students and to refrain from sharing their own religious or philosophical convictions. They should also try to create conditions for dialogue with and between students, and help them to attain a level of mutual tolerance. This type of approach is not necessarily easy for everyone. It requires personal reflection on one's own positions and of the rules of conduct by teaching staff.

What sometimes occurs when the subject of religions is broached is a sort of general unease. In their daily school activities, some teachers, if they are believers, are apprehensive about dealing with religious issues in their syllabus for fear of not being able to separate their personal convictions from the academic approach they are obliged to adopt. They practise a type of self-censorship for fear of not being able to respect the idea of laicity irrespective of all religions. Those most likely to be at ease in such a situation would be teachers who are non-believers.

The experiences and reports from teachers (Estivalèzes, 2005a) show that it is often easier to talk about the religious systems of Antiquity, e.g. Egyptian, Greek or Roman, as they belong to societies of the past and do not raise the same problems as contemporary religions. There are two dangers here: that of relegating religions to museums; and even that of trivialising religions and making them things of the past.

Yet it is important to present the religions of Antiquity, not only as a set of divine figures and myths, but also as systems with meaning for their contemporaries. It is clear, even when dealing with living religions, to the extent to which they are presented in history textbooks as tied to their roots, a justifiable position from a historical viewpoint. But they are often stuck in an idealised past, sometimes to the detriment of their recent past.

If these questions are not easily dealt with by teachers, then the same will be true of the students. Much has been said about the absence of religious culture in young people, but another type of problem sometimes presents itself: that of children who believe in a particular faith, who have a strong sense of identity and a need to express their convictions (but often with little or incorrect information about their religion). This sometimes gives rise to the situation where students call into question the right of a teacher to talk about a religion that they do not themselves support. Some information activities are needed in such situations. Teachers (and pupils) need to reflect firstly, on the principle that talking about religions may not be limited to those who believe in them; secondly, on the type of historical or literary approach best-suited to the classroom discussion about sources, beliefs, rites, texts and values advocated by such and such a religious system; and finally on the values of the lay school system which are common to all students and provide the space for non-religious debate on religions. However, the academic approach tends to limit itself to certain aspects of the religious experience that are analysed

with the help of appropriate methodological tools. If we are to respect the freedom of conscience of all, then the convictions of some should not be imposed on all others.

The principal and best solution to all of these difficulties is a requirement for disciplined academic thinking on religions. This can only happen if teachers are properly trained either by means of the courses offered or, and inevitably, by means of self training and learning consisting of reading and individual work. The Debray report (2002a) is evidence of the political awareness of how important adequate teacher training is. However, it remains uncertain whether politicians will actually take decisive steps to encourage the teaching about religions in schools.

Conclusion

In relation to the study of religions in schools, France is unique in the West. No class is entirely devoted to religions, in comparison with other European countries where there are widespread differences in practices from one country to the next (Willaime & Mathieu, 2005). This is itself deeply linked to the way relations between the State and the Church are conducted. Thus, in Germany, confessional courses on religion exist in theory, but the reality is more complex since the situation changes from one region to another. In Spain or Italy, religious classes are optional and Belgium offers classes on morality for those students who do not want to take confessional courses. England, Wales and Scotland have a multicultural religious education in their fully state-funded schools, and Denmark offers lessons on history of religions for older pupils. What can also be seen is that, although countries have different models, most of them are seeking new alternatives, partly as a result of the growing number of requests for exemption by students, but also in order to meet new cultural and civic needs, in particular in plural and secular societies, such as those mentioned above (but not limited to France).

Although it is neither possible nor desirable to envisage a common model, due to the individual characteristics of each country in relation to their history and to the types of relationships between State and Church (Davie & Hervieu-Léger, 1996; Willaime, 2004), and particularly between religions and educational systems, it is however interesting to compare thinking on the place of religions in schools in each country (Borne, 2004; Willaime & Mathieu, 2005), as well as the results of current pilot projects with their positive points and difficulties. The social debate in France on teaching about religion could contribute to this shared European review process which hopefully will enrich the debate among members of the European Community and beyond.

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF HINDUISM AND HINDU-INSPIRED SPIRITUALITY TO AUSTRALIAN RELIGIOUS AND VALUES EDUCATION

Terence Lovat

University of Newcastle, Australia

Introduction

One of the more rapidly growing religions in Australia during the period since the 1971 national census is Hinduism, boosted especially by an increasing pattern of immigration from India and Sri Lanka (Department of Immigration and Multi-cultural and Indigenous Affairs [DIMIA] 2004a, 2004b). This chapter draws on documentary and empirical work conducted with Hindu and Hindu-inspired communities during the 1990s and the early part of this century, work which was initially designed to elicit greater understanding of the Hindu perspective on emerging school curricula around religious and values education. The focus later expanded beyond concerns of school curricula to capture broader understandings of the nature of Hinduism and Hindu-inspired spirituality and the potential contribution of such spirituality in an increasingly multi-cultural and multi-faith society. It also explored the specific topic of Hinduism and Hindu-inspired spirituality as agencies of inter-faith movement, change and conversion. The work was located in the first instance among the regular adherents of one of the two largest orthodox Hindu Temples in Australia, the Sri Venkateswara Temple in Sydney. Later work expanded to take in those more broadly Hindu-inspired groups that tend to gather around such sites from time to time and the main focus among these latter groups was the Brahma Kumaris.

Australia's Religious Heritage and the Increasing Hindu Presence

Australia's multi-cultural population is religiously diverse but the foundational spirituality of Australia belongs to its indigenous inhabitants, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders,

the 'first-comers' (Stockton, 1995) to this land, came approximately 40,000–60,000 years ago, migrating from Asia and Melanesia. Over the course of the following millennia, they developed a strong spiritual bond with the land, a bond which powerfully characterised their beliefs and ritual systems. The relationship between the people and their land was mythologised and ritualised into a religious system that was highly integrated, cohesive and complex (Stockton, 1995), but one which nevertheless varied according to geographical location (Swain, 1991). Indeed, Aboriginal land spirituality is one of the richest to be found anywhere in the anthropology of ancient peoples and, despite the variability of beliefs across regions, there was in place a shared world-view and common set of religious beliefs and practices. The most central of these beliefs was that concerned with the spiritual power of the land (Tonkinson, 1991). This central belief connoted animism where the land and other natural phenomena possess living spirits, and these spirits are perceived as having influence over day to day life.

Of all the major religions imported into the country in the past two hundred years, Hinduism may well be the one which best fits with the indigenous spirituality of Australia, and hence the one that is most suited to the same physical environment. Like Australia's indigenous spirituality, Hinduism is a religion that emphasises the immanence, rather than transcendence, of the spiritual world. This is an immanence that draws the world of the gods and that of the day to day into an integral relationship. There is no separation between religion and life, in the form that has characterised so much of the history of Christianity. In turn, for both Australian indigenous spirituality and Hinduism, the physical world is sacralised in both its animate and inanimate forms. The elements of nature are to be revered, if not worshipped in some cases, and to be brought into a relationship with the believer. For Christianity, by contrast, the dominant theology about the physical environment has been around its rightful subjugation by humankind. Hindu spirituality strikes a deep chord with a set of spiritual traditions that were active in the Australian continent at the same time that the precursors to Hinduism were forming on the Indian sub-continent.

The early history of Hinduism in Australia is tied to extensive travel undertaken by sub-continent Indians in the late eighteenth century (Bilimoria, 1989). Here, we understand the word 'Indian' to denote people who originated from lands that today would include India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It is not therefore a racial term as much as one that identifies a large and diverse ethnicity with common ancestral, cultural and linguistic roots. While stories abound that Indian traders may have come to the continent in the Middle Ages, the first concrete evidence relates to an Indian presence in the so-called 'First Fleet', those English incursions to the continent in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first two decades of the nineteenth century (Clark, 1987). It was during this time that Australia was colonised and settlers from the British Isles began to form a Western nation in a very non-Western environment. The Indians arriving as part of the First Fleet were members of ship crews. Subsequent Indian travellers came to Australia as imported workers, filling various roles such as labourers in plantations (primarily in the state

of Queensland), as well as working as domestic servants, shepherds and farmhands, camel-drivers, hawkers and pedlars who travelled to remote communities (Christian Research Association [CRA], 2001).

By the 1857 census for the colony of Victoria, 277 Indian or 'Hindoo' people were recorded among its population. There were also a number of Sikhs and Muslims identified in the same census, though they were in smaller numbers than the 'Hindoos' (Bilimoria & Ganguly-Scrasse, 1988). The number of Indians (including Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Afghans) in Australia grew steadily from 1857. Two thousand such inhabitants were recorded in the 1871 'national' census, three thousand by 1880 and four thousand five hundred by the first census (1901) of the new federated nation (Bilimoria, 1996). The extent of this South Asian population was sufficient to unnerve many white Australians and the first signs of a public backlash can be traced to the 1890s. By the time of Federation, growing public unrest about the number of non-European immigrants in Australia resulted in a government response which took the form of the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, otherwise known as the 'White Australia Policy'. The policy had a heavy impact on non-European immigration, with immigration from Asia virtually ceasing for the next 60 years (CRA, 2001; DIMIA, 2004c).

The range of policies associated with the general 'White Australia' approach created severe limitations not only on immigration patterns but also on conditions for non-white Australians living in the country already. For example, there were restrictions on the employment of 'coolies', the renewal of licenses for pedlars became increasingly difficult to obtain and it became virtually impossible for a non-white to gain a leasehold over land (Bilimoria, 1996). Under these restricted conditions, it was difficult for Indians of any religious affiliation to build a comfortable life, or to do little more than merely survive. In these conditions, it was unlikely that a strong, cohesive Hindu community would develop and the evidence is that there was little sense of a communal ethnic or religious identity for the diaspora Hindus of this period (Bilimoria). Ultimately, the White Australia Policy was effective in reducing the number of Indians living in Australia or seeking to come here. After the Policy's repeal in 1967, immigration from the 'Indian' lands began to grow again.

It is via the immigration of the 40 years or so since the repeal of the White Australia Policy, marked by huge waves of transportation from Asia and the Middle East, that the profile of Australia's religious affiliations has been re-shaped so radically (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2003). It is as a result of these waves of immigration that Australia has become one of the world's most multicultural societies characterised by a rich religious difference (Bouma, 1995). The Australian Hindu population is an important element in that richness and diversity. Of the approximately half million new arrivals to Australia between 1996 and 2001, five per cent nominated Hinduism as their religious affiliation (ABS). In the 1986 census, there were 67,300 people who affiliated with Hinduism living in Australia; this was 0.4 per cent of the Australian population. By the 2001 census, there were 95,500 Hindus living here, representing 0.5 per cent of the population (ABS). This

growth represented a proportional increase in a fifteen year period of 42 per cent, one of the largest proportional increases in religious growth for any religion evident in the 2001 census data (ABS).

The heavy immigration of Hindus to Australia has not only been impelled by Australia's stronger embrace of Asian immigration in the past 40 years, but also by particular world events. This has been especially the case where the Hindu diaspora is concerned. For example, the number of Indian arrivals from Fiji expanded hugely in response to Fijian political unrest throughout the 1980s (DIMIA, 2004d; Hughes, 1997). Similarly, political unrest in both Sri Lanka and parts of Africa has increased the numbers of people from those Hindu diaspora communities who have migrated to Australia. The result is that the more recent arrivals in Australia have diversified the local Hindu population beyond that which existed in earlier times. In 2001, there were approximately 31,920 Hindus of Indian descent (DIMIA, 2004a), with another 19,770 of Fijian descent (DIMIA, 2004d), 10,210 Sri-Lankan born Hindus (DIMIA, 2004b) and, although constituting a very small percentage of the Hindu population, there were also 390 Mauritius-born Hindus living in Australia at this time (DIMIA, 2004e).

Importantly for the research at hand, Bilimoria (1989) identifies two aspects of Hindu influence in the period in question. One concerns the actual population growth caused by masses of Hindu people coming to live in the country, while the other is related to a growing preoccupation in the broader Australian population with universalist spiritualities such as theosophy, transcendental meditation, divine light, Hare Krishna, and various groups oriented around the practice of yoga. This latter grouping includes the Brahma Kumaris. Bilimoria's two levels of Hindu influence are interrelated, with the presence of Hindu Temple worshipping communities providing a point of focus and affirmation for broader forms of Hindu-inspired activity.

Research in the Relevant Communities: (i) Mainstream Hinduism

Ethnographic research with the Sydney Hindu community was conducted throughout the early 1990s. This consisted of regular visits to the Sri Venkateswara Temple in Sydney's southern suburbs. This is one of only two major and complete Hindu temples in Australia, the other one being located in Melbourne (CRA, 2001). Both of the temples tend to be dominated by the minority Sri Lankan Hindus, in conjunction with Tamils and Telugu speaking Hindus who originate from southern India and Malaysia (CRA). The results of this aspect of the work have largely been recorded already in a number of works (Lovat, 1995a; 1995b; 1997a).

The ethnography was based on weekend visits to the Temple, including participation in Temple activities, casual conversations, more formal interviews and a 'paper survey' which was made available in the Temple precincts and which, when completed, was left with the local priests for collection or sent directly to the researcher. While many aspects of Hinduism were aired during these encounters, the major topic of concern centred on the attitudes of the community to new ventures in

religious and values education being trialled in New South Wales public curricula. The research was part of broader research which was reaching out to all the major forms of non-Jewish and non-Christian religions in order to understand better the levels of support and/or concern which existed around the development of these new curricula.

Two common themes emerged from the ethnography. First, there was a general consensus among participants that a religious education that involved comparative religious studies and values was not only useful, but actually part of the Hindu quest. Second was the issue about who was qualified to teach about the religious and values dimensions of Hinduism.

To the first of these: it was generally accepted that it was valuable to have a curriculum in place that promoted religious awareness. A common theme was that 'to be religious is to be Hindu' (Lovat, 1995a, p. 174). Thus, Hinduism's inter-religious nature was seen by the adherents generally as being readily accommodating of other religions. The following comments by the participants represent this view:

'To the Hindu, all religions are ultimately the same.'

'By knowing about other religions ...[students] will learn that all religions are but different paths to the same goal. Through this, they will realise that all people and races are inter-related. It is hoped that conflicts between various groups on the basis of religion will cease to exist.'

'[It's exciting for] everyone to learn something about everyone else ...this is very Hindu in fact!'

'...by learning about other religions, children can come to appreciate their own religion better' (Lovat, 1995a, p. 173).

For most participants, education that took a broad-based approach to religious literacy was to be embraced, particularly given the view that there were few mechanisms in Australia that provided the general population with knowledge about Hinduism. Furthermore, because the religious schools of Australia were perceived as failing to achieve a broad approach in their favouring of an evangelical approach to religious education, some participants viewed it as particularly important that public sector schools take up the broader responsibility (Lovat, 1995b).

To the second issue: there was frequent comment concerning the capacity of a non-Hindu to teach about Hinduism (Lovat, 1997a). For the most part, participants, including priests and those with theological knowledge, expressed the view that anyone who had sensitivity for the subject could teach others about Hinduism. This attitude fits well with Hinduism's broad tolerance for the notion that there are multiple paths to the same end. No participant in this aspect of the research believed that having a Hindu teacher was essential to religious education about Hinduism, though some did differentiate between education 'about' and education 'in' a religious tradition (Lovat, 2002a; Rossiter, 1981), even if they did not use this language for the differentiation. For these latter participants, the deeper search for religious growth implied by 'education in' would require that a guru, rather than the mere teacher, be involved. They did not regard this as part of the school's

responsibility but they could see that a broadly based and highly informative religious education could play a part in laying the foundation for such 'education in', otherwise known as religious induction or enfaithing, if the induction was into a particular tradition. At this point, most suggested that induction into the spiritual depths of Hinduism would require mentoring from a Hindu guru.

There were a small number of participants who articulated views quite different from those reported above; the first one was a firm view about the need for change in Hinduism. This view was associated with scepticism about Hinduism being in fact as tolerant and beneficent as was its surface claim. One participant cynically described Hinduism as a meaningless superstition used by the upper castes for political power and their own interests. As a consequence, it was argued that there was little hope for change in the religion because the religious establishment had too much to lose. Another participant reasoned that, as the younger generation of Hindus inter-married with Australians, the old Hindu religion would meet its demise, or at least change, as more and more Hindus came into contact with Australian religious people who tended to be more active in seeking change in their religion and religious structures. The dominant view here, shared by a number of participants, was that the real value of a broad based religious education was that it would encourage students, including young Hindu students, to question their own religion. This minority believed this would have long term beneficial effects for the Australian Hindu community (Lovat, 1995a).

Another participant argued that many of the traditions of Hinduism were a result of cultural traditions, rather than religious dogma, and that most Hindus did not know this. While he was less cynical about the contemporary role of Hinduism than some of those cited above, he nonetheless identified much that could be changed, and he saw that education generally and religious education in particular would play a key role in such change. He saw the potential of education about Hinduism to benefit the religion by highlighting certain areas where change was needed. As an example of a potential beneficial change, he offered the issue of gender inequality, suggesting there is no basis for it in the theology of Hinduism and a good religious education would uncover its true basis as mere outdated chauvinism. He saw an education that promoted religious awareness as an opportunity for greater numbers of Hindus to understand better their own traditions, as well as providing the opportunity for them to explore other religious worlds (Lovat, 1995a).

The Hindu participants also endorsed without question the importance of the role of schools in teaching about and inculcating personal and social values. That is, participants frequently drew a distinction between religious values and cultural ones. On the one hand, religious values were perceived as relating to matters of the soul, whereas cultural values were associated more with material concerns, such as developing one's place in society. For the Hindu, religious values were characterised as providing the fundamental mores to which all other values were tied; indeed, other values were seen to be meaningless without a religious basis (Lovat, 1995a; 1995b).

Research in the Relevant Communities: (ii) Brahma Kumaris

The Brahma Kumaris (BK) are a religious sect originating from within a broad Hindu culture. The BK seek personal enlightenment through meditation (raja yoga), chastity, communal living and vegetarianism (Lovat & Morrison, 2000). The BK have grown into an international organisation with a strong egalitarian reputation and they hold a special international status that is rare for a sect of this kind. For example, since 1980, the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University has been affiliated with the United Nations as a Non-Government Organisation with general consultative status with UNESCO and UNICEF. The BK have sponsored regular congresses and 'international dialogues' with world leaders, chiefs of industry, academics, the media and religious groups, around issues associated with world peace. In addition, UNESCO has co-sponsored BK publications and programs of learning, providing it with the status of being a major coordinator of international dialogue (Whaling, 1995).

The BK participants in the research were all individuals who visited the various BK centres across Australia, with many gravitating to the Hindu Temple on occasions, especially around major festivals like that of Ganesha (Lovat, 1997b). It was at one such festival that contact was first made with the BK thanks to their completing the paper survey available in the Temple precincts. This was followed up with many encounters with BK across Australia and worldwide, including through an international dialogue at the World Spiritual University in Rajasthan, India. These more profound encounters led to more intense understanding of a range of issues associated with the inspiration of BK and, indeed, with its basis in Hinduism (Lovat & Morrison, 2000). Unlike the data above, the data below are published in this chapter for the first time.

When asked generally about what they would change in the school curriculum or add to it, the BK participants invariably focussed on issues of education about and in religion. Comments such as those below were typical:

'In a secular school system located in a materialistic society, I'd like to see all kids exposed to comparative religions....'

'...classes should certainly delve into the beliefs of all the religions of mankind [sic] through the ages, but be primarily concerned with spirituality....'

'Perhaps more study of a wide range of religions with the intention to find common ground....'

'For me, I think it would be helpful to not only focus on various religions and their beliefs but also to know how to create a spiritual experience....'

Similar views were also found in the comments made by the BK participants around issues of values education. On this issue, however, there was greater sensitivity to a number of distinctions to be made. On the one hand, all participants readily proposed that values needed to be part of the school curriculum but a number drew the important distinction between religious values and moral or cultural values. One participant argued for the need for 'moral values based training, not religious

studies' while another participant expressed the view that mystical or esoteric knowledge should not be taught in schools, because such knowledge should be for those genuinely searching for truth. The implication here was that mystical knowledge was inappropriate for the general school curriculum. As this person put it, 'When the student is ready, a master appears'. On the other hand, in general the BK participants expressed a view that more values based education was a good thing, with comments like the following being typical:

'More of values education....'

'Add values as an entire topic.'

'Teaching children throughout their schooling and at university about values in an interesting and spiritually empowering way would have a great effect on society, the home, human relations, etc.'

'...more time should be given to teaching values.'

'We need to incorporate values based education in all subjects....'

One clear difference between the views of the Sydney Hindu worshippers and the BK was that while the BK did indicate a similar valuing of the introduction of a study of comparative religion into the school curriculum, many BK also called for the inclusion of programmes that focussed on the development of students' confidence, skills and knowledge related to self-esteem, the exploration of one's self, and meditation. This valuing of 'self' and meditation is not surprising given that one of the primary values of the BK belief system is self-realisation through meditation. The BK participants also showed a tendency to link the development of self-esteem and the process of learning about oneself with a placing of oneself within a world community or world family. In the comments that follow, the BK participants illustrated their concern for self-esteem, meditation and the notion of the one world family:

'The highest priority should always be personal self esteem and seeing oneself in the context of a world family....'

'[Schools should] teach people about their inner selves—who they are; that we are all brothers [sic]; that the world belongs to everyone.'

'[Schools should provide] basic skills on self respect.'

'A study of philosophy to promote cognition and lead students on a path to self questioning and development. This I would have permeate all other specific subject areas to cross fertilise, stimulate and challenge.'

'[Schools should provide] training in positive thinking, self-reflection or meditation.'

'I see so much pressure, stress and worry on kids today that meditation is a very good tool in supporting them all.'

There were two additional concerns of the BK participants that were not raised by the Sydney Hindu worshippers. First, was a minority concern to include what could be classified as 'life skills' in the curriculum. Participants suggested that their own

schooling lacked education about how to succeed in life in very practical ways, such as knowing how a bank operated, a local council functioned, issues around child-rearing, and other such practicalities. Other related suggestions included recommendations to include training in conflict resolution, reflective listening and relationship skills. Second was a concern that schools focussed altogether on the 'wrong' type of knowledge or outcomes. One participant stated that '...secondary curriculum seems to have lost the value to 'basic' teaching in favour of output in quantity and academic cleverness.' Another suggested that '...the curriculum needs to be simplified—there are too many useless subjects and more time [should] be given to teaching values.'

*The Contribution of Hinduism and Hindu-inspired Spirituality
to the Concerns of Religious and Values Education*

In terms of its contribution to religious understanding in a multi-faith society, and the religious education thereof, Hinduism has much to offer to the average Australian. It is a very different religion from those most familiar to the dominant population. It might properly be described as 'sensuous', expressing a profound understanding of the countless dimensions of the phenomenon we know as 'God'. God truly is everywhere and in many different forms, with a manifestation for virtually every moment in life. This allows an ease of access to the spiritual by the Hindu. In this respect, it is reminiscent of the indigenous spirituality on which all Australian spirituality ultimately rests, and Hinduism may be seen as a genuinely better fit with this core aspect of Australian spirituality than are Judaism and Christianity. In this respect, Hinduism has much to offer to a religious education that is concerned to delve into the distinctive character of Australian spirituality.

Similarly, it has been through the influence and concerns of new religious groups, like the Hindus and their affiliated groups, that Australia's public school system is moving away from its characteristic secularism towards embracing the notion that the inculcation of both religious and values education is part and parcel of its charter before society (Lovat, 2001; 2002a; Lovat & Schofield, 1998; 2004). Indeed, most especially around values education, the BK have been one of the more powerful influences in Australia (as elsewhere) in the design, development and implementation of a program that currently operates in 80 or so international settings. This is through their very explicit support of the UNESCO-affiliated *Living Values in Education* (Living Values Educational Programme, 2001). The group has been instrumental in supporting Australian public and private school systems in trialling and experimenting with this internationally sensitive and comprehensive values education programme.

Especially for those who conceive of religious and values education as being ultimately about 'education in', or personal induction into the worlds of religion and values, Hinduism and Hindu-related spirituality would seem to have much to offer. The testimony is that many are profoundly influenced when they encounter this form of spirituality. Beyond the large number of movements, like the BK, that

have found such a strong home in Western provinces, there is a range of specific testimony, related both to eminent characters and to ordinary folk who have been profoundly influenced in their religious and values stance through their encounters with Hindu spirituality.

For instance, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Second World War martyr, engaged with Hinduism and one of its many offshoots, Jainism, largely through his active dialogue with Gandhi. Bethge (1970) offers testimony that Bonhoeffer's interest in India and its spiritualities was an abiding and tantalising passion for him: that he had a keen sense that Christianity had originally come from the East and that it was only through the East that it could ultimately be understood. Bethge cites him as saying of Indian spiritualities that: 'Sometimes, it even seems to me that there's more Christianity in their 'paganism' than in the whole of the Reich Church' (p. 330). It was through his study of and reflection on Hindu spirituality that Bonhoeffer developed his profound pacifism (Lovat, 2003).

Similarly, Dom Bede Griffiths, who became, at one and the same time, Benedictine monk and Hindu holy man. As a fully professed monk and Catholic priest, he went to India, initially as a missionary, only to be converted, in a sense, by the profoundly spiritual world of Hinduism. Over time, he put the two spiritualities together, not so much formally as in and through himself. Towards the end of his life, he claimed to have come to renewed knowledge of God through his Hindu journey and, through this, to have come to know and understand himself for the first time. Like Bonhoeffer, Griffiths was changed, becoming a living enshrinement of reinvigorated understanding between two apparently very different religious traditions. In the words of Fox (1996), he had become a 'post-denominational priest', at one and the same time a Hindu monk and a Christian sannyasi (Lovat, 2003).

As seen in so many of the BK participants in this research, Hindu-inspired spirituality can play a particular part in facilitating people's search for renewed spiritual growth. It tends to provide safe haven, especially for those wearied of the strictures of the 'High God' and invariably authoritarian religions (Lovat & Morrison, 2000). In a particular species of cross-religion research, some of the commonalities between Judaism and Hinduism were explored in both theoretical terms (cf. Chatterjee, 1994; Goodman, 1994; Holdrege, 1996) and in empirical terms through case studies of two women reared as orthodox Jews but who had converted to BK (Lovat, 2003).

One of the women described above began by saying that she could not believe she was meeting someone who was doing research in an area about which she had been having such strong feelings. Her work in Israel had convinced her of a deep synergy between Judaism and the Hindu-based spiritualities. She volunteered much that reflected directly on the theoretical work cited above, namely about the common family, home and ritual eating aspects of the two traditions, and that behind the *prima facie* differences of monotheism versus polytheism, there was actually a common conception of a singular godhead (Lovat, 2003).

It was noted as relevant that BK had taken off with amazing speed in Israel, in spite of a fair amount of cultural resistance to religious movements that take people

away from Judaism. In spite of this, the attraction of BK had been remarkable throughout the entire country, with most converts identifying the ease with which the transition of spiritualities could be made. She spoke of her own experiences of feeling at times in Israel that she was in fact in India, so familiar was the look and feel of the environment and the spirituality. She said she had at times felt the converse while in India (Lovat, 2003).

The other woman confirmed that, even from the perspective of her Orthodox Jewish background, she felt a natural progression from the God of her upbringing to the God held to be central by BK. Moreover, she confirmed the sense of closeness between the two traditions, from her point of view, suggesting that she had even seen aspects of fairly explicit Hindu theology growing anew in Judaism. She provided the example of a renewed belief in Karma which she saw growing in Judaism, especially in relation to issues of violence and warfare and the reviewing of traditional beliefs related to God's will (Lovat, 2003).

Both women suggested strongly that the religious paths they had been placed on initially in Judaism had been confirmed and enhanced by their exposure and movement to a Hindu spirituality. They both, at times, made strong statements about coming to know themselves for the first time, about self-discovery and change of the sort reminiscent of the experiences of Griffiths in his cross-religious journey. One of the women said that, in many ways, she had found in BK what she felt Judaism had been attempting to teach her all her life. Beyond that, she felt that she now understood the religion of her childhood better than ever because of her penetration of Hindu spirituality (Lovat, 2003).

Like Bonhoeffer and Griffiths before them, having come to understand themselves anew through engagement with a far bigger world than they had grown up with, neither woman could remain where she had previously been. She had to change her life position in some way. This would seem to be at the heart of religious education as induction. Not that it necessitates conversion from one religious tradition to another, but that it will of necessity challenge the religion of one's childhood and raise the possibility of movement of some sort, perhaps to more profound understanding of one's own faith or perhaps to separation of some sort. The testimony of the women in question was, ironically, that both may be achieved in the one movement.

Conclusion

It would seem, therefore, that Hinduism and Hindu-inspired spirituality have much to offer to an Australian religious education that is expanding its charter from narrow enfaithing regimes to that of cross-cultural religious literacy. Assuming that one is interested to explore and understand ever more one's own faith and culture, the study of Hinduism offers much in the way of new knowledge and understanding, not only about Hinduism but, by reflection, about one's own faith tradition. This would seem to have been the experience of Bonhoeffer, Griffiths and the women in the case studies. Furthermore, as suggested already, it would seem that Hinduism

might have a particular synergy with the core indigenous spirituality of Australia, and this might be explored further in ongoing research

In the light of this clear potential for cross-cultural enrichment through the right forms of education, let my last words be about the need in our time for robust and bold forms of religious and values education (Lovat, 2002b). Granted the issues that face the world today, we need forms of religious and values education that are dedicated to making a difference in the way people understand each other and function together in the human community. We need a religious and values education whose charter is unapologetically one of generating peace, goodwill and cooperation among peoples. We need a religious and values education that impels the kind of self-reflection that instills induction into new ways of thinking and acting, both religiously and in terms of the values we hold and espouse. For Australian religious and values education, Hinduism and Hindu-inspired spirituality are playing their part in facilitating this kind of religious and values education, be it by the richness that their religious instances provide to the curriculum, by the power of these spiritualities to challenge and impel change in a student's thinking and life-positioning, or by the direct impact that the followers of these spiritualities are having on the development of religious and values education curricula.

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ISLAMIC NURTURE AND IDENTITY MANAGEMENT: THE LIFEWORLD OF MUSLIM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN NORWAY

Sissel Ostberg

Faculty of Education, Oslo University College, Norway

Introduction

The focus of this chapter will be on the role of Islam in the lives of Norwegian Pakistani children and young people, with regard to identity management in a secular and plural context. The discussion will, however, incorporate a discussion of education and socialisation and thereby also be related to the role of religious education as a part of secular schooling.

In 2005 the immigrant population in Norway numbered 364,981, i.e. 8% of the total population (Statistics Norway, 2005). The Pakistanis formed the largest group within the immigrant population: 26,950 (of which 15,154 were first-generation immigrants, while 11,796 were persons born in Norway of Pakistani parents). The Pakistani immigration to Norway started at the end of the 1960s and was a typical labour seeking chain immigration, similar in character to that of the immigration of Pakistanis to Britain (Anwar, 1996). The first empirical research on which this chapter is based was conducted from 1994 to 1998 (Østberg, 2003a). The second research was a follow-up study of the first and was conducted from 1999 to 2002 (Østberg, 2003b; 2003c). Five Pakistani families in Oslo with varied socio-economic and cultural backgrounds were followed closely throughout a ten year period. Participant observation and formal and informal interviews were the key methods used. The sample consisted of sixteen children and young people within these five families, supplemented by more children, young people and grown-ups who were part of their life-worlds at school, in the mosques and at leisure activities.

The next section will clarify the concept of secular context by relating it to a discussion of plurality and deconstruction.

Secularity, Plurality and Deconstruction

The concept of 'secular context' is applied to describe Norwegian society generally, and the state school specifically. Despite the fact that 86% of the population in Norway are formal members of the Norwegian Lutheran Church (Statistics Norway, 2005), the majority of the population lead secularised lives in the sense that more and more sectors of their lives are perceived as independent of institutionalised Christianity. In Norway, eight out of ten Norwegians either never attend a sermon or do so less frequently than once a month. Following Luckmann (1967), it can be argued that this lack of church attendance does not necessarily imply a non-religious population, but rather indicates the possibility of an 'invisible' religiosity, i.e. a religiosity marked by an increased individualisation and privatisation (Martin, 1991). The Christian faith is no longer a taken-for-granted reality or, as expressed by Berger, Berger and Kellner (1973), 'religious definitions of reality have lost their quality of certainty and, instead, have become matters of choice. Faith is no longer socially given, but must be individually achieved...' (p.81).

From some points of view, which will be discussed below, the concept of plurality is more appropriate than secularity to characterise the social and cultural process in late-modern societies (Skeie, 1995; 2003). The concept 'secular context' is, however, retained because secularity, as explained above, dominates the mainstream discourse and provides the public context of Islamic nurture. A plurality of religions and values is, however, not only discernible but increasingly expressed both within a majority and minority context. Pluralisation is not only caused by immigration of people representing 'new cultures and religions', but also by social and cultural processes within the majority population. One consequence of pluralisation has been documented as increased secularisation in the sense of the privatisation of religion; another consequence is revitalisation of 'a sleeping religiosity' and 'the cultural heritage'. The interaction between an already secularised majority and a 'new' Muslim minority is essential for an understanding of the life world of Muslim children in Norway and in other Western societies. Another aspect strongly influencing the everyday life of Muslim children and young people is an increased Islamophobia (Lewis, 2003). For most Muslim children, Islam is what they value highest in life. Islam is for them synonymous with peace, love and all that is good in life. How then are they to understand that some people commit terrorist acts in the name of Islam? And how is it possible for a child to bear the burden of being directly or indirectly accused of supporting such acts? A general stereotyping of Islam and Muslims, in the media, from some politicians, and even at schools, has led to an increased experience of dichotomisation and discrimination. The period after September 11th 2001 has been especially difficult. Counteracting this negative development, recognition of diversity is needed. Religious and non-religious plurality of values should increasingly form the common frame of reference for majority and minorities.

Because of the loss of faith as something socially given or taken-for-granted, the situation of modern men and women has been characterised as

'a deepening condition of homelessness' (Berger et al, 1973, p. 82). However, such a characterisation does not express the experiences of Muslim children and young people in Oslo, despite their parents' immigrant history and the tendency towards marginalisation in Norwegian society. The following self-presentation was a typical expression of the children's feeling: 'We are Pakistanis, but Norway is our country. We are born here' (Østberg, 2003a, p. 161). This attitude will be elaborated by examining the distinction between traditional and modern religious plurality and by connecting this discussion to the concept of 'deconstruction' and 'cultural flow' (Hannerz, 1992, p. 4).

Traditional religious plurality 'indicates the existence of a variety of different religious groups or religious views in a specific context' (Skeie, 1995, p. 85). This description may characterise contemporary Western societies but is also a description applicable for earlier phases of Western history (e.g., the Roman Empire) and for other parts of the world (e.g., most South Asian countries). Modern religious plurality differs from the above description in the way that 'the number of different relations we take part in has increased, which in turn has multiplied both the number of perspectives and the speed of perspective-shifts' (Skeie, 1995, p. 87); that is, even if we belong to different religions or worldviews existing side by side in a given society, we are to a lesser extent locked up in separate 'worlds' than within a traditional plurality.

Individuals within a modern plurality are affected by the same cultural processes that affect their social context. Ethnic and cultural boundaries are permeable and Muslim children and young people operate with a diversified set of dichotomies. They are exposed to a 'cultural flow' more than to different 'cultures' existing side by side (Hannerz, 1992). Theories about how this type of social context may influence their identity management can be discussed within modes of deconstruction related to the concept of 'cultural flow'. First, the understanding of modern plurality or a post-modern perspective implies a deconstruction of the idea of 'the individual' as an undivided soul (a romantic view) or a rational 'whole' (a modern view) (cf. Skeie, 1995, p. 88). Secondly, it implies a deconstruction of the concept of social arenas as separated cultural 'sectors'. Consequently, social arenas like home, mosque and school, have not been found to represent different aspects of children's identity. Children's and young people's movement between these arenas has been found more essential for their identity management than are the cultural differences between home, mosque and school. Interaction, communication and negotiation between individuals and groups of people are of greater importance for an understanding of Norwegian Pakistani children's life-worlds than an understanding of home, mosque or school as separated 'cultures'. Children's and young people's attitudes to and preferences with regard to TV/video/music/Internet/mobile phones may serve as an illustration of their plural and deconstructed life-worlds. The content of what they are watching or listening to or writing is to a large extent out of reach for their parents and even their teachers. The new technologies give the young people a space of their own, which may imply that new ethnicities and social boundaries are being constructed.

Meaning and Social Belonging

As expressed by Berger: 'The social world intends, as far as possible, to be taken for granted. Socialisation achieves success to the degree that this taken-for-granted quality is internalised' (Berger, 1967, p. 22). Related to the discussion above concerning the conditions of late-modern plural societies in general and the minority situation in particular, this chapter raises the question of whether this type of successful socialisation is achievable for Muslim children in Norway. Interpretation of the findings has, however, repeatedly given evidence for the conclusion that the 'danger of meaninglessness' was avoided, and a 'nomos' was established. Muslim children in Oslo were not 'homeless', although their life-world was more complex and diversified than that of their parents.

Parallel to the mutual dependency of meaning and context within a hermeneutic paradigm, meaning and social belonging are found to be strongly interrelated as part of children's life-worlds. 'Cultural and social identity' is therefore maintained, as a cumbersome conceptualisation with reference to the plurality of sources nourishing children's and young people's identities. The empirical data conveyed a complexity of social groups to which Pakistani children felt they belonged or were attached: the extended family, Pakistani friends and neighbours, Norwegian schoolmates and teachers, Muslims of multi-ethnic origin, a multicultural neighbourhood, Norwegian society etc. The children's and young people's comprehension of being Pakistani in Norway exhibited a complexity that included aspects of cultural and social distinctiveness and a periodic, situationally dependent, denial of that distinctiveness. This kind of complex social belonging was formative for development of a 'multiple cultural competence' (cf. Jackson & Nesbitt, 1993) and constituted the social context for development of what in my study has been called 'integrated plural identity'.

Although there was a link between the establishment of meaning and the experience of social belonging, there was no direct link between their cultural identity and the social group with which a child or an adolescent identified in a given situation. Their cultural identity (i.e. the establishing of meaning) was, in other words, not derived from a social identity. The children and young people expressed social identities derived from their affiliation to or 'membership' of different social groups (e.g. schoolmates, a specific mosque, family), but they also expressed cultural identities, that is, consciousness of meaning, which transcended social groups. To give one example: children might express strong social identification with a specific group of Pakistanis (e.g. their extended family), but they might at the same time express 'ideas and modes of thought' (Hannerz, 1992, p. 7) not consistent with those of other members of that group. By comparing reflections, attitudes and religious practices of different generations (parents-children or elder-younger siblings), cultural diversities were discernible, even within socially stable groups like families. The cultural aspects of children's and young people's identities changed to a greater extent than social aspects, not least because the communication with 'others', so crucial to the development of a cultural identity, was an on-going process across group boundaries and within groups (compare the above discussion

of modern plurality). Children's and young people's self-presentations were for example seen to shift between a diversified set of 'us-them' dichotomies, that is, an ongoing communication with 'others'.

However, young people and young adults experienced boundary processes and processes of exclusion more strongly than they had done in their childhood. When they experienced boundaries that were difficult to cross, either in relationship to non-Muslim peers or to their parents, they used as the most common approach negotiations. As expressed by Khalid (17) when I asked whether his relationship to girls had changed:

It has changed 190 degrees! [sic]. I was really shy, but now, at school, I have got to know a lot of people. All keep together. I have got to know one special one who lives nearby. We met a Saturday two weeks back. Most Norwegian girls. I cannot speak with Pakistani girls. It has happened that I have told [my parents] that I am at training but actually I am with my girl friend. It is OK, but it may mean a little stress. Often I tell them I am just at my cousin's place. I don't think it will be any problems (Østberg, 2003b, p. 171).

In most cases negotiations were concerned with relationships with the other sex, drinking habits or staying out late at night. Sometimes negotiations also concerned interpretations of Islam. In both matters the Muslim young people are not very different from other young people of our time. As expressed by Marianne Gullestad (2001), there is a shift from obedience to negotiation based on the longing of young people to be themselves, to be authentic. The temporality and spatiality of children's and young people's life-worlds were shaped by a combination of secular and Islamic elements. Their everyday 'here and now' life-world was marked by a secular context but not divorced from experiences of a relationship between a 'here and now' and a mythical past, that is, a sacred time and space, for example through the linkage of qibla—Mecca—Hajj—holy water in the fridge at home—God's presence. Local, national and global social and religious networks were also found to constitute trans-territorial spaces in which they lived. How a sister and brother experienced a pilgrimage (umra) to Mecca in two quite different ways may illustrate the diversity of orientation within a Muslim framework. For Khalid (17), the visit to Mecca was like a holiday. He found it interesting to see how people in Saudi Arabia lived. His sister Saima (14) had another experience and she narrated from Mecca:

This time when I was there, I felt really proud of the big mosques in Mecca and Medina, [I] was almost touched and got very sad when we left. It is something quite different to see it in real life. It was quite another feeling to see it, to smell it, the Kaba itself. Would like to get that type of perfume. At the edge there is this hole and you see bits of stones from inside. That's where you kiss. Now I know it is not only fantasy. I am happy when I think about it! You feel you are not the only one. All are like you, all are with you (Østberg, 2003b, p. 174).

How Khalid and Saima experienced umra differently exemplifies the individuality of young people. As sister and brother they had been exposed to the same Islamic nurture; and, as children, there was no difference discernible in their attitudes and practices. Five years later, however, their commitment to Islam had taken different paths. Both were practising Muslims, but for Saima Islamic practices (hijab, umra, prayers and fasting) were important elements in her identity management. For Khalid, Islamic practices were something he took for granted and performed, but he did not express himself through these practices.

The Role of the Mosque and the State Schools in the Minority Situation

The mosques have been found to play different roles in the lives of children. They fulfilled religious, educational, cultural and social functions. These functions of the mosque are also found in Islamic countries and in countries with a Muslim majority (cf. Barton, 1986). Some aspects seemed, however, to gain importance or change character in the minority situation. The mosques both increased and lost importance. The mosques increased their influence within the Pakistani community for two reasons. First, they functioned as an educational arena contributing to the Islamic education of children. Many parents felt their children were given a much stronger religious training than the one they remembered from their own childhood in Pakistan. Some parents put increased weight on religious nurture because they wanted to influence their children while they were young and still willing to listen to their parents (Østberg, 2003a). The greater unpredictability of the future in a minority situation added a new dimension to the seemingly general attitude of a father's concern for his children. According to Geaves (1996), the stress on giving the children an Islamic nurture may be interpreted as a parental attempt to counteract what is regarded as the negative influence of Western society generally and of schooling particularly.

Secondly, the mosque gained importance as a social and cultural arena, primarily for men, but to a lesser extent also for women. This tendency may be attributed partly to the lack of a family network, partly to the 'rediscovering' of Islam. Women's role in this process has been attributed to their traditional dominance of the informal family sector including their support to the formation of educational institutions (cf. Shaw, 1994; Roald, 2001).

Pakistanis in Oslo who did not want to be involved in religious or political conflicts as part of mosque activities, but still occasionally (e.g. at festivals) wanted to perform prayers in a mosque, found it difficult to be present anonymously. This factor led to the opposite of what has been described above as the increased role of the mosques. It led to a privatisation of Islamic practice. The minority situation increased the consciousness of being an insider or an outsider within the Pakistani Muslim community. A 'middle-way position' was more difficult to practise in Norway than in Pakistan. Whether these experiences should be understood within the background of the minority situation (as parents seemed to think) or as typical for late-modern societies generally, is disputable. This study found that the tendency

to increased privatisation of Qur'an classes might be understood both as a normative and a liberal strategy. Privatisation may be identified as a typical expression of 'modern religiosity', that is, a weakening of institutionalised, official religiosity and a strengthening of 'invisible religion' (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1995). Although the religiosity among Pakistani Muslims in Oslo cannot be called 'invisible' in the same way as the religiosity of secularised Christians has been, some of the alternative ways of organising Qur'an classes may be regarded as steps in the same direction.

The increased tendency to organise Qur'an classes independently of the mosques is interpreted as an expression of modernity in the sense that 'localised influences drain away into the more impersonalised relations of abstract systems' (Giddens, 1990, p. 140). In the context of this study, it means that whereas 'going to the mosque' to attend a Qur'an class was often part of a local community activity (something neighbouring children did together), attending a private Qur'an class in a suburban area was part of a sector of life connecting children to a worldwide (abstract) Muslim community, but one hidden from school mates or neighbouring peers.

This study gives evidence for a diversified, even contradictory, set of attitudes within this mode of 'late-modernity'. Both actively practising and non-actively practising Muslims were found among the families who had chosen a private solution concerning Qur'anic teaching for their children. This implied that 'not going to the mosque' did not indicate a specific religious attitude. Among some respondents, private Qur'an teaching meant that high priority was given to this education both with regard to costs and time invested. According to some parents, the investments were not wasted because they gave a good result, that is, recitational skills and the internalisation of Islamic values.

Among others, private lessons were chosen as a minimum investment. These caused less inconvenience for children because they could be adjusted to other activities, like school and sport. This attitude was found both among parents with a liberal religious attitude and among more normative Muslims. Being a good Muslim was still an aim of the upbringing but it was somewhat detached from the knowledge of Qur'an recitation. Some of the more 'normative' (e.g. the Deobandi or the Jama'at i-Islami oriented) defended this attitude by underlining a moral standard as more important than rituals.

Islamic institutional development in Oslo is in accordance with recommendations given by some Muslim writers concerning growing up in a multicultural secular society:

As far as the Muslim community is concerned, its duty is to see that children get habituated to prayer and the recitation of the Qur'an from childhood. Parents have to undertake that job and the community has to arrange for week-end schools. Mosques should be utilised for this purpose (Ashraf, 1993, p. 11).

Neither of the two tendencies identified above can be regarded exclusively as a minority phenomenon; they are rather typical of a late-modern, urban way of life.

The same tendencies are found in cities in Pakistan and in other parts of the Muslim world, especially among the upper and middle classes of the population. Among the upper class, private Qur'an lessons have always been common because rich people could afford to pay for a good teacher. The new situation, especially in cities like Oslo, is that privatisation of Qur'an classes is more common among the middle class as well. The motivation may, as we have seen, be either to secure a qualitatively good training or to make such a training as convenient for children as possible by not letting the Qur'an class be a hindrance to their participation in other social activities. The minority situation strengthens a development that is generally discernible in late-modern societies: the tendency to institutional formation and to individualisation.

Modern Plurality and Integrated Selfhood

Since the formation, development and management of personal identity is unthinkable without interaction with 'others', there will always be a relationship between individual and collective elements of personal identity, that is, of what is specifically individual and what is shared with others. Identity is not only formed by social processes but 'it is maintained, modified, or even reshaped by social relations' (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 194). Identity is not defined in terms of individual properties but places us in some social space (Østberg, 2003; cf. Taylor, 1991).

The theory of 'integrated plural identity' is embedded in a hermeneutical paradigm, that is, in a semiotic understanding of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Geertz, 1973; Ricoeur, 1971, 1981). Reality is within this paradigm regarded as socially constructed and a human is accordingly an animal 'suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun' (Weber, as cited in Geertz, 1973, p. 5). An interpretation of these significances is a presupposition for understanding. Similarly 'identity' is not a given entity to be discovered, but a symbol to be interpreted.

The concept 'integrated plural identity' is chosen to express the dual character of Muslim children's and young people's identity: its changeable, fluid, shifting character on the one hand and its stability or 'integratedness' on the other, that is, a dynamic stability. The term 'integrated' is used in the same way as the term is applied when 'integration' is contrasted to 'assimilation': for example, in the integration of immigrants as distinct from assimilation of immigrants. Integration is also conceptually related to the concept of integrity which will be explored below. 'Integrated plural identity' implies the retention of plurality, diversity, instability, fluidity and contextuality without the individual's losing a sense of 'self'. The concept of 'self' is here used according to Ricoeur who distinguishes between 'self' as *idem* (sameness) and as *ipse* (selfhood) (Ricoeur, 1990).

The concept of 'self' as '*idem*' indicates sameness in the meaning of being identical with, whereas 'self' in the sense of *ipse* implies no assertion concerning some unchanging core of the personality. (Ricoeur, 1990, see p. 2). Ricoeur emphasises the ongoing conversation with 'others' and with 'oneself as another' in the process of identity development and management. The focus is not on who

I am, but on who is asking this question [of identity]. Ricoeur says: 'Oneself as Another suggests from the outset that the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other,' (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 3). The concept of narrative identity is applied by Ricoeur to characterise the communicative and interpretive aspect of the identity process (Ricoeur; cf. Meijer, 1995). Personal identity is formed by an on-going conversation with 'oneself as another', that is, a dialectic between sameness and selfhood, and by situating personal identity in history. As expressed by Meijer in her interpretation of Ricoeur: 'One's biographical story restores unity by bringing coherence into diversity, continuity into changes of one's life, including the changes in oneself' (Meijer, 1995, p. 94).

Muslim children's and young people's reflections on who they are will, in a Ricoeurian sense, be regarded as more crucial for their identity management than the answers given in different contexts. As narrators of multiple narratives they expressed a diversified set of cultural and social identities; but, on a personal level, this diversity or plurality did not threaten their personal integrity. They were the narrators or the interpreters of their own lives. As long as the children communicated a diversified set of identities (Pakistani, Muslim, Norwegian, Norwegian-Pakistani, Punjabi, Asian etc.) to a diversified set of 'others', they 'narrated' themselves through an interpretation process and in this way developed their selfhood (cf. Meijer, 1995).

However, in my view, children's and young people's interpretive reflexivity should not be understood solely as intellectually based, but rather as 'embodied', that is, grounded in bodily and sensory experiences. This finding is not attributed to the young age of the children but to an epistemology which situates our understanding of human beings in their way of 'doing' things (cf. Vertovec, 1992). For example, when the children did not possess the appropriate terms for describing aspects of Islam in their lives, this was not necessarily an instance of 'lack' of knowledge; it was because their knowledge was of a different kind, that is, embodied. In Taylor's words: '...our bodily know-how, and the way we act and move, can encode components of our understanding of self and the world' (Taylor, 1991, p. 309).

Conclusion and Implications for the Classroom

This chapter has argued that religious and cultural traditions were mainly transmitted informally through parents and other significant others at home and in the mosque. Norwegian Pakistani children were socialised into becoming Muslims and Pakistanis and they did not distinguish clearly between the two identities. They were, also, socialised into being Norwegian through formal schooling, media influences and inter-action with non-Muslim friends.

The bodily and sensory aspects of Islamic nurture and the interwovenness of Islamic and Pakistani cultural elements were found to dominate primary socialisation at home and in the mosque and to contribute to the shaping of their embodied knowledge. Another decisive aspect of Islamic nurture was formal educational

training through the Qur'an schools, either in mosques or in private homes. Children had to learn to pray, to read the Qur'an, to purify, dress properly and respect food restrictions. The combination of formal educational elements and informal bodily and sensory aspects, especially related to gender socialisation, strengthened the role of Islam in children's lives, as part of an everyday practice and as potential religiosity.

Islamic practice, or the knowledge of Islamic practice, as part of their everyday life-world, contributed to the development of their social and cultural identities, regardless of type of mosque affiliation or degree of practice. A reference to the combination of informal socialisation at home and the institution of Qur'an schools is not simply an answer to the question concerning the 'how' of the transmission process. This institutional combination of strengthened socialisation offered the children arenas for social belonging and 'construction of meaning'. The meaning of their life-world was not fixed and static, and not exclusively bound to these arenas, but highly attached to them. Socialisation at school and through the media and with non-Muslim friends extended their cultural identity by broadening their perspectives without implying a de-socialisation of Islamic values. Formal schooling was no threat to their Islamic and Pakistani identity but rather irrelevant to it. In the development of integrated plural identities, Islamic nurture was part of that plurality; and had an integrating function through its role in primary socialisation and through its special combination of formal educational and informal bodily and sensory elements. Islamic identity was not simply one among many aspects of their plural selves: there was a plurality within their Islamic identity.

Norwegian Pakistani children, rather than being understood as victims of cultural clashes, have been found to display 'multiple cultural competence' and strong reflexivity by being exposed to diversified communication with 'others'; and to be engaged in a continuous interpretation of their own position.

Some implications for the classroom may be drawn from these findings. First of all, there is a need for teachers to avoid stereotyping Islam. Islam as experience and practice is more multiple and varied than a fixed set of doctrinal beliefs and religious duties (cf. Ipgrave, 1998; 2002). Different communities exist within Islam in the diaspora as well as in societies dominated by Muslims, and there are individual varieties within each community. Interpretations and negotiations are part of the Islamic world as they are part of other religions. Pupils should be encouraged to consider the relationship between individual 'believers' and the larger faith community as a general approach to religions (Jackson, 1997; 2004). Rethinking religious education and plurality is of special importance today against the background of the present dominant 'Islamophobia' of the Western world (Østberg, 2003d).

Secondly, and an implication especially relevant for societies discussing whether to offer religious instruction (within a specific faith tradition) or to offer a common religious education to all pupils: there is no reason to believe that Muslim minority children will be confused by a multi-faith approach to religious education. Cultural and religious plurality is already the context of their Islamic nurture. On the contrary,

being exposed to multi-faith teaching in the classroom may supplement their Islamic nurture both with regard to communicative knowledge within their own tradition and with regard to a broader and educationally based insight into other traditions (Hull, 1996; Jackson, 2003; 2004). For them, not least as citizens of Christian secularised societies, there is a need for sound knowledge of Christianity in all its variations of past and present. Anthropological, interpretive and educational approaches to religions (including Christianity) would be in accordance with the plural life-world of both minority and majority children and would not only contest stereotypes and acknowledge individual variations but also take children and young people's existential questioning and religious beliefs and practices seriously.

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HANDING ON RELIGIOUS VALUES TO YOUNG ORTHODOX PEOPLE IN A WESTERN, SECULARISED SOCIETY

Richard Rymarz

Australian Catholic University, Melbourne

Introduction

One of the critical issues facing Christian Churches today is that of maintaining the allegiance of youth, understood here to describe those in late adolescence, aged between approximately fifteen and twenty years of age. This is a critical time as individuals move beyond parental control and seek to establish their own identity (Kay & Francis, 1996). The persistence of religion largely depends on how successful one generation is in passing on its belief and practices to its offspring (Meyer, 1996). The importance of inter-generational transfer of religious beliefs and practices has been commented on in a variety of studies spanning numerous faith traditions (Bendroth, 2002; Goa, 1989; Keysar, Kosmin & Scheckner, 2000). Contemporary Western societies, however, present challenges to the transfer of beliefs and values for many so-called mainline religious groups, such as Catholic and established Protestant traditions. (Davie, 1994; Finke & Stark, 1992; Kelley & de Graaf, 1997). Orthodox Christians, whilst relative newcomers to Western societies, experience many of the challenges that face members of mainline Churches.

Orthodox Christians here are defined as those Christians that belong to Churches arising from the ancient Patriarchal Sees of Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch. Such a definition encompasses both large Eastern Orthodox groups such as the Greek Orthodox Church and smaller Oriental Orthodox traditions such as the Coptic Orthodox Church. The historical roots of Orthodox communities lie in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, and, in later times, in Eastern Europe. Over the last hundred years, however, many Orthodox communities have been established in Western countries such as France, England, the United States and Australia and it is to the experience of these communities that this chapter will be devoted. A key factor in understanding the challenges facing Orthodox youth in Western countries

is the need to recognise that as relatively recent arrivals they are not, comparatively speaking, large communities.

The challenges facing Orthodox youth in Western countries can be grouped in three areas. The first is the possibility that identification with a national group may override religious allegiance. For many Orthodox youth being Orthodox is almost synonymous with being part of an ethnic group. Secondly there is a range of issues that relate to the problems of maintaining a traditional culture alongside the demands of life in a Western society. The richness of Orthodox tradition is difficult to live out and translate into a Western context which is often regulated by concepts which are quite foreign to many Orthodox Christians. The third area relates to the challenges associated with the passing on of a faith tradition that involves difficult and abstract theological concepts. Orthodox youth need to be able to integrate mystical and cognitive ways of attaining religious knowledge.

The Question of National Origin

Orthodox Christians are usually identified with a particular ethnic or national group. This is often expressed in the group's self-description, such as Greek, Serbian or Russian Orthodox: a descriptor of both religious and ethnic identity that can lead to confusion. Young people can have trouble distinguishing between ethnic origin and religious beliefs and practices. Maintaining an ethnic identity in a Western context with an emphasis on language and other salient features of ethnicity can be difficult (Chai, 1998). These issues are compounded, however, when religious beliefs are also included within ethnic identity (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2003).

When Orthodox youth attend community events, for example, is this an affirmation of their ethnic or their religious identity? The close connection between nation and religion is a special feature of those Orthodox traditions which spring from a Byzantine ecclesiology (Chadwick, 1964; Ware, 1979). Here the Emperor was, in classical times, the head of both the State and the Church (Hussey, 1986). One implication of this was that the Patriarch, the senior bishop, was subordinate to him. Whilst the time of Christian Emperors has long since gone, the relationship between Orthodox Churches and states often leads to a merging of national and religious identity, especially in countries where Orthodox are both new arrivals and a minority (Athanasou, 1989). The close association of the Church with national groups is known as *phyletism* (Clarke, 2000). It is difficult to distinguish ethnic from religious factors but the strength of religious beliefs and practices is diminished if they are made subordinate to or contingent on more general expressions of ethnic or national origin (Ata, 1989).

The consequences of phyletism can be manifested in at least three ways. Firstly, by identifying with Orthodox Christianity, the young person can also be associated with a host of ethnic and national tensions. To what extent are young Orthodox believers in the West expected to immerse themselves in the ethnic conflicts of the old world? A recent example of this has been the civil war in the Balkans. On one level it may be associated with high levels of concern for the perceived

injustices on the various ethnic groups involved. On another level some may try to distance themselves from the conflict as it is something which properly belonged in a European forum.

Secondly, phyletism can lead to a type of social isolation where the group does not see beyond ethnic boundaries to common links with both other Orthodox communities and other Christians. This cuts off the Orthodox youth from other like-minded individuals thus prescribing their social group. Networks of affirming believers are an important part of sustaining Christian commitment in Western cultures (Allen, Wilder, & Atkinson, 1983; Erickson, 1992). This problem is compounded by some of the historical tensions between Orthodox groups. Some of these are relatively recent and relate to juridical issues such as the dignity and freedom of national Churches. For example, the status of the Macedonian Orthodox Church is a matter of some dispute amongst Orthodox believers (Poulton, 1995; Shea, 1997). Do Macedonian Orthodox youth see themselves as part of a strictly national Church or part of a wider fraternity of Orthodox believers? The sense of being part of a much wider supranational group has important implications for personal identity. This is especially true when the boundaries between the faith community and the wider culture become less important and this is the case in many Western societies (D'Antonio, Davidson, Hodge & Meyer, 2001; Hoge, Dinges, Johnson, & Gonzales, 2001). Whereas it may have been important to identify with a close group of associates in the country of origin, this is not as critical in a Western country where teenagers seek to define themselves as part of larger more inclusive communities (Donelson, 1999; Dudley & Dudley, 1986; Meeus, 1996). For many immigrant Orthodox youth the world that their parents grew up in, which was often based on being part of ancient rural communities, is not something to which they can easily relate. The bonds of family and clan which are important to older generations also do not have the same hold on young people who are growing to maturity in a culture that does not esteem kinship bonds.

Thirdly and perhaps the most important consequence of phyletism is that it runs the risk of separating young Orthodox Christians from the great animating principles of religion. Stark and Fink (2000) describe religion as the exchange between the individual and God: a sense that the individual is able to have a direct and personal relationship with an all-powerful and all knowing Deity. According to Stark and Fink this brings with it great costs but also great benefits. If this fundamental relationship is obscured by feelings of national and ethnic origin, the vitality of the religious tradition is severely imperilled because the young person could see religious belief and commitment not as a direct experience of the transcendent but as being part of a national group. The interests of a particular national group may ebb and flow. The reward of religious belief, to use Stark and Fink's terminology, should be independent of political affiliation, because at the heart of this relationship is a personal bond that links the believer with the divine and transcendent. This also has implications for how Orthodox youth see the Church. A Church which identifies itself most strongly as a teacher and protector of the relationship between the individual and God is likely to retain the allegiance of youth (Iannoccone, 1994;

Reeves, 1998). The view of the Church as being an icon of God is one that is strong in much Patristic theology (Kelly, 1989). This view can be compromised if the Church becomes too identified in conflicts that even the most dedicated member can see are ultimately caught up with political and worldly questions.

There is evidence that some Orthodox communities have dealt relatively successfully with the challenge of phyletism by stressing the religious identity of the group over its national affiliation. An example of this is young people who are members of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Coptic youth report high rates of affiliation to the Church (de Souza & Rymarz, 2003). Part of the reason for this is that Coptic self-identity is itself based on strong religious views, which are historically based (de Souza & Rymarz, 2004). The divisions between Copts and other Orthodox groups go back to Patristic times and the great early Councils, with a formal split occurring after the Council of Chalcedon in 453CE (Young, 1983). Copts have an interest in the theological disputes of these Councils and express their identity by tenaciously holding on to the traditions and dogmatic teachings of Church (Malaty, 1987). This in turn leads to a conviction amongst Coptic youth that they are in close contact with God and that God is interested in them and their welfare and this affects the way they live. This is how one Coptic youth expressed some of the motivation for the way that they behave:

When dealing with other people, we do things from a more 'what's right, what's wrong' perspective or 'would this please God or wouldn't it'. I wouldn't say that we're better than other people, we're not, we are all equal, but we struggle to do well and we struggle first of all to please God, to glorify Gods name. I haven't seen many other cultures do that (de Souza & Rymarz, 2003, p. 69).

Another aspect of Coptic identity is the strong links that exist with the tradition. This is expressed in a number of ways such as their pride in being the successors to St Mark the Evangelist the first bishop of Alexandria; it is not merely because their Church originated in Egypt. Copts' experience of being *outsiders*, both in Islamic Egypt and in the Chalcedonic Orthodox world, *has* left them with a cultural resistance that is unusual amongst Orthodox Christians (Wakin, 2000). Here is how one young Copt expressed this idea:

If you lose your traditions, you lose your background and you change so I guess our Church really stuck at it. I mean that's the whole idea of our Church, we stuck at it from the very start. What we got from St Mark has been passed down, it has never changed...(de Souza & Rymarz, 2003, p. 70).

This is a Way of Life

A critical aspect of religious enculturation is the role of family (Boojamra, 1989; Mikhail, 1992). This is true for all religious groups not just the Orthodox; but it may be of especial importance for Orthodox Christians as the family is seen as

the context in which a person learns not so much about Christianity but rather about ways to be a Christian (Magdalen, 1996). Orthodox communities experience the family pressures that are common in Western countries such as the difficulty in combining work and family, marriage breakdown and declining birth rates (Bowes, 2004). If the family structure is impaired, the Orthodox face substantial challenges in the attempt to pass on not just a sense of their tradition but also a lived experience of it (Magdalen, 1995). If the family comes under pressure this results in a fracturing of the communal religious life (Francis & Katz, 2000). This has a strong impact on young people who seek peer support and affirmation. If this is not available through the faith community then they are likely to find it elsewhere.

The centrality of the family to Orthodoxy can be seen by a number of ritual practices which emphasise the point that the family is the cradle where Orthodox belief and practice are nurtured. House blessing is an important event in many Orthodox traditions. This takes at least two forms. First there is the annual blessing which commemorates the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. It is significant that the priest comes to the home of the family to mark this important feast, which is one of the most solemn in the Orthodox calendar. The second blessing is a longer ceremony that occurs when a family first moves into a home. Both blessings recognise that the family acts as a conduit for the actions of the Holy Spirit in nurturing the faith commitment of all family members.

Another example of the sacredness of the home and family in Orthodox thinking is the way in which icons are often displayed in Orthodox homes. This parallels to some extent what happens in Orthodox churches. Icons are not primarily representations of religious events (Evdokimov, 2004). They are invitations to those who look upon and pray before them to contemplate another world and to acknowledge the immediacy of God to the life of the believer (Vrame, 1999). The fact that icons adorn homes is a reflection of the Orthodox belief that the home is a place that must be fundamentally concerned with the spiritual transformation of youth.

Orthodox youth can also face wider difficulties in a culture that, whilst not openly hostile, does not support their traditional beliefs and practices (Schmemmann, 1969). Many of the social and moral expectations, for example, placed on Orthodox youth, especially women, are not in accord with Western norms. Tensions can arise when the Orthodox way of life is seen as involving too many burdensome regulations (Walker & Carras, 1996). These tensions are most pronounced in those communities that are most integrated into the wider society. This problem can become especially acute if it is associated with a historical memory of the country of origin. The increased religiosity of immigrant ethnic groups has often been associated with the need to establish a clear boundary between the new environment and the immigrant community (Haddad, Smith, & Esposito, 2003). For Orthodox youth in a Western context, this may translate into expectations of them that even their contemporaries in their countries of origin would find restrictive: parents are often unaware of changes in cultural norms in countries of origin. Many Orthodox youth have expressed to me their annoyance about restrictions that are placed on

them in the name of preserving cultural identity; restrictions which now do not apply to family members of similar ages in the country of origin.

Orthodox life is typified by a variety of religious rituals that play an important part in sustaining the cultural and religious identity of youth. To keep these practices alive and vibrant is a critical challenge. In their lands of origin, supported by social conventions, Orthodox Christians had developed behavioural patterns which allow for the social expression of religious belief and practice. The idea of prolonged fasting, for example, an important Orthodox practice, is well supported by both Christians and Muslims in the Middle East and elsewhere. Fasting in a Western context, in contrast, is seen as an unusual practice (Greeley, 1985). Preserving ritual practices, such as fasting, is important for two reasons. Firstly they allow for *a way into the tradition* for youth, that is, a mechanism for expressing their religious identity that identifies them with the faith community. Secondly they provide a boundary that distinguishes Orthodox youth from those in the wider culture. Both aspects of ritual practice are important in sustaining the religious allegiance of youth.

The most important ritual for Orthodox Christians is the Divine Liturgy. This is at the heart of the communal life of Orthodox traditions. The Liturgy is a long and elaborate ritual, which can be difficult to fit into a busy weekend schedule with many competing demands. Yet the Divine Liturgy represents the epitome of Orthodox belief and worship (Meyendorff, 1979; Schmemmann, 1974). It is often said of Orthodox Traditions that the key to understanding them is to ask not what their members believe, but how they worship (Clendenin, 1995; Cross, 1988). In Orthodox Churches the liturgy is celebrated with devotion and splendour. This can be seen in the interior of an Orthodox Church which is ablaze with colour, from the numerous icons and the light from candles. It sets out to create an atmosphere that seeks to recreate the world to come, a vision of heaven. In trying to convey to youth a sense of this transcendence and of the critical importance of the Divine Liturgy, the Orthodox community is faced with some significant challenges. The whole Western mind-set seems to work against a proper Orthodox conception of what is taking place in the liturgy. This is not a simple worship service or something similar. The Divine Liturgy expresses, in the most perfect way, the mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ and reveals and makes present Jesus (Zernov, 1961). The liturgy also has an important educative role presenting, through prayer and action, the most important teachings of the tradition. To appreciate fully the significance and majesty of the Divine Liturgy, however, requires the believer to take part in its celebration as well as try to comprehend its significance. This is not a straightforward matter for youth who are growing up in a culture which, in general, has a different view of the place of the transcendent in everyday life; a perspective that seeks to internalise the transcendent rather than express it in a public and communal form (Mantzarides, 1996). How Orthodox traditions articulate their understanding of the transcendent (expressed most perfectly in the Divine Liturgy) is of critical importance in assisting their youth to make the transition to adult participation in the faith community.

Passing on the Faith

Apart from membership of an Orthodox family and an integrated faith community, how do Orthodox youth gain an understanding of the religious beliefs and practices of their faith community? This question has two aspects. The first is relatively straightforward and relates to largely organisational and structural issues such as the development of educational programmes and the establishment of schools and other institutions. The second is more challenging and concerns the ways in which Orthodox communities view religious knowledge and enculturation.

In comparison with both Catholic and Protestant traditions, Orthodox communities lack educational support. Orthodox youth often do not have the support of specific educational initiatives, such as schools and universities that cater for their needs. In Australia, for example, many Orthodox youth attend Catholic or other Christian schools in the absence of ones for their particular community (Dwyer, 1986). Many Orthodox youth are, therefore, exposed to curricula that have been developed for other Christian communities and their inherent perspectives (Nicozisin, 1977). The lack of established schools often results in an undeveloped religious education as far as Orthodox young people are concerned. To compensate for the relative lack of schools and colleges, the local Orthodox Church becomes an important focus for a wide range of activities that must cater for a variety of ages. Without proper planning and support, local communities can struggle to develop these services, and young people are left feeling that they have been neglected or excluded. This is only partly alleviated by weekend activities such as Sunday schools or programmes run in holiday periods to help Orthodox youth understand their religious heritage.

A deeper issue for Orthodox communities relates to their perception of the nature of religious knowledge. One of the most significant historical debates amongst Orthodox Christians concerns the ways by which religious knowledge is acquired (Boojamra, 1989). In contrast to members of Western traditions, Orthodox Christians have been more interested in a mystical approach to attaining religious knowledge. This is not gained through any one sense but by engaging all of them. This type of thinking is often associated with the *Hesychast* approach. A Hesychast is someone who, literally, seeks communion with God through stillness. This stillness is to be achieved by constant repetition of a prayer or mantra, most usually *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me* (Lossky, 1957). This leads to a direct and complete appreciation of the power of God and how this can be integrated with daily life. The philosophical argument about the place of Hesychastism in Orthodox life was a strong theme in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; it was largely resolved by an endorsement of this approach as a critical way to gain religious knowledge (Ostrogorsky, 1968).

The Hesychast approach can, moreover, be contrasted with a more typically Western approach which places more emphasis on a cognitive or intellectual grasp of religious knowledge (Rossiter, 1982). Much Western education is premised on this understanding of religious knowledge and so much teaching is directed towards

gaining an understanding by cultivating the intellect. What is lacking here from an Orthodox perspective is a sense of the whole, where all the senses encounter the divine. The tendency of schools in Western settings to place more emphasis on cognitive learning and less on mystical holistic approaches leaves Orthodox youth disconnected from one of their traditional ways of knowing and learning. It also leads to significant challenges when presenting the Orthodox tradition to students in an educational setting.

Many of the core beliefs of Orthodox Christians flow from rich and complex theological positions. Whilst these dogmas are held tenaciously they can be difficult to pass on to younger generations who are steeped in the highly secular discourse of Western societies and who have not benefited from targeted educational programmes (Tarasar, 1990). One example of the difficulties facing Orthodox youth as they try to understand critical, but difficult, parts of their tradition is that of comprehending Trinitarian teachings. Trying to convey the pivotal nature of the Trinity in many aspects of Orthodox belief and practice is a critical challenge. Trinitarian beliefs derive from the common experience of the Patristic period but involve technical and precise language that is often difficult to explain even to young people who have a high level of secular education. This can lead to a cognitive dissonance between the professional knowledge of the young adult and his/her religious beliefs. In the case of Orthodox young adults, it can lead to their worldviews becoming more secular and akin to those of the prevailing culture.

The difficulty in passing on these complex beliefs is compounded by typical Orthodox pedagogy, which often begins with a statement that is reflective of the depth of Orthodox thinking but which is very difficult to explain. The contrasting treatments of a Christological topic in Western and Eastern Christian contexts illustrates this point (Rymarz, 2003). In Catholic schools Christ is often introduced without direct reference to the Trinity. Western practices, following Rahner, are often heavily Christocentric beginning with a low Christology and then ascending to a more complex understanding (Egan, 1998): catechetical programmes may begin with a presentation of Jesus as a friend or mentor as a prelude to a gradual unfolding or development of the theme. The Orthodox Trinitarian emphasis is to some extent in tension with this approach. It is regarded with some suspicion by the Orthodox because its departure point makes a dangerous assumption about the nature of the Godhead, that is, that one can readily separate the human and divine in Christ (Athanasou, 2002). Whilst theologically sophisticated, this point does lead to an educational impasse. How does an Orthodox educationalist proceed in areas such as these?

A common feature of Orthodox pedagogy is to begin with an immersion in the Trinity (Elias, 2002). The Trinity is represented in art and in countless other ways in the lives of the faithful. Many Eastern prayers, for example, include or end with the invocation of the Trinity. Delving into the exact doctrinal formulations of Nicaea, Ephesus and Chalcedon requires precision with language, and can be too dense for secondary students. However, as Eastern Christians' theological vision is so heavily Trinitarian, to be faithful to this vision it is necessary to make some attempt to encounter this teaching.

An Eastern approach is far more likely to begin with a strong doctrinal statement that tries, as far as possible, to express in human terms an aspect of God's interaction with the world and then attempts to *unpack* or explain the statement (Elias, 2002). This type of immersion in doctrine runs the risk of losing students at very early stages, especially if it is done too often. But it does allow for the mystery to be stated as clearly as possible and perhaps to cultivate student interest.

In a similar vein it is often difficult for Orthodox youth to gain a sense of the importance of the Patristic writers for them and their tradition. These writings were crucial in shaping Christian belief and practice in the post-apostolic period. The Eastern love of Patristic writings is well known and much Orthodox teaching is grounded on the authority of the Patristic writers (Hall, 2002). For contemporary religious education, the idea of using the Fathers of the Church does offer students a change in the regular offering of saints and heroes. The problem remains, however, of how to convey a sense of the importance of the writings of these revered figures who lived in a time and culture that is far removed from contemporary discourse. Orthodox youth often question the relevance to them of Patristic writers, many of whom lived solitary and ascetic lives. In addition to this there is the issue of the themes of much Patristic writing. Such texts are heavily theological using philosophical categories that were common in the period of the great Councils but which are not widely known today.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed some of the challenges facing Orthodox communities living in Western societies. The definition of the term Orthodox used here encompasses a wide range of traditions and perspectives. The three themes identified, the close identification of religion and nationalism, the stress imposed on Orthodox ritual and family life, and the problems associated with passing on an understanding of the faith traditions may have general applicability. This should not obscure the fact the different traditions, however, meet these challenges in different ways. In the future the commonality of Orthodox perspectives with other communities who seek to pass on religious beliefs and values may become more important. Some traditions, such as the Coptic Orthodox, may be more successful in passing on belief and practices than others. The questions that are posed here are how do some communities achieve this and do these strategies have general applicability?

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THE TREATY OF WAITANGI: IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

T. John Wright

St. John's College, Auckland

Introduction

<i>Aue te mamae i ahau e</i>	<i>Oh how I hurt within</i>
<i>He aroha e te iwi e</i>	<i>With sadness for the people</i>
<i>Mo tatou katoa e tukinotia nei</i>	<i>Who are being exploited</i>
<i>E nga tauwiwi o te ao</i>	<i>By those from another world</i>
<i>Ka titiro ra nga mahara</i>	<i>I look for a solution</i>
<i>Ka mohio te ngakau e</i>	<i>And my heart tells me</i>
<i>Ko te Tiriti o Waitangi e</i>	<i>The Treaty of Waitangi</i>
<i>Te oranga pumau e</i>	<i>Provides the hopeful promise</i>

(Smith, 1997, p. 212).

This is the first verse of a Māori action song composed by Tuini Ngawai of Ngāti Porou in 1959. It depicts the social and economic plight of that group of Māori, who are the tangata whenua, 'the [indigenous] people of the land', who reside on the East Cape of the North Island. This area is geographically remote, economically deprived, educationally weak, and socially challenged. However, this scenario is not confined to that 'tribe'. Most Māori can identify with the sentiments expressed. This verse promotes the Treaty of Waitangi as a possible path out of their plight.

Tania Rei, of Victoria University of Wellington, in response to a question as to 'what must non-Māori do to give effect to change to meet Māori aspirations?' for education replied that 'the preferred framework ... would be the Treaty, and as the non-Māori partner to the Treaty the Government has to ensure that Article 2 and Article 3 rights are met' (Tapine & Waiti, 1997, p. 66). This particular interpretation of the Treaty and its significance for contemporary Māori in all walks of life,

including that of theological education, is dominant in contemporary Māori and liberal non-Māori thinking. The debate in the social, cultural, juridical, political and educational arenas is underpinned by the debate concerning the Treaty and its role in contemporary society. In 2004 alone five books on the story and the significance of the Treaty were published primarily for the interested public (Evans; Moon & Biggs; Orange; Slack; Stenson) and two on the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal (Byrnes; Hayward & Wheen). This paper sets the role of the Anglican Church within education in this context. It focuses especially on St. John's College as a provider of Christian theological education and the working out of the significance of the Treaty for that task.

Treaty of Waitangi

How to relate to the indigenous peoples has been a major issue ever since the arrival of the European world into the south pacific, hitherto unknown to the west. This was complicated by an inter-European rivalry with respect to lands and resources to be appropriated and incorporated into dominions. Different models were utilised by differing European nations and even by the same nation. In Aotearoa New Zealand, because of gradual infiltration by a range of groups from whalers to convicts to settlers, the British crown, even if initially somewhat reluctantly, took on itself responsibility for this land and all its peoples, both indigenous and newly arrived.

In February 1840 at Waitangi, a treaty was signed between the first governor, Hobson, and about 43 chiefs (and eventually by 500 more). However, not all chiefs endorsed it. Nonetheless, as far as the British and most Māori were concerned, the peoples of New Zealand had ceded that land with the right to govern (Article 1), and in turn the British had granted Māori 'all the Rights and Privileges of British Subjects', the protection of the Crown (Article 3), and at the same time allowed Māori to have unfettered control and use 'of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess' unless they chose to sell their property to the Crown (Article 2). Law and order had been imposed on all. At the end of the initial signing Governor Hobson declared, 'we are now one people', a declaration that does not sit well in the current political climate. Yet, this statement is still utilised by the current Governor General as an ideal, but with a different emphasis: 'We two peoples together make a nation' (Cartwright, 2004; Metge, 2004). There was, and is, a potential for transformation in which the land and its peoples would be blessed. Initially, the signing of the Treaty allowed colonisation in all senses of that word to proceed at an increasing rate, with the consequential pressures on the indigenous people, including demand for land by the settlers, and the ever-increasing marginalisation of Māori.

The written Māori version of the Treaty (te Tiriti), does have significant differences from the English version (Biggs, 1989; Ross, 1972; for full texts of the Treaty see Appendices 1 and 2 of Orange, 2004; or State Services Commission, 2005). For most of those commentators who today accept this version as definitive, te Tiriti is understood as a partnership between two equal and sovereign peoples, the Māori

and the Crown. The new comers were welcomed into the land and now had their place by right. There were two cultures, two peoples, two heritages, and peoples of two stories, living in the same land, honouring each other and working together in partnership.

The status of the Treaty has had a chequered history (Gilling & O'Malley, 2000). It is only since the 1980s that it has been incorporated into legislation. Over most of its history, the Treaty was 'a time bomb waiting to explode' (Sharp, 1997, p. 428). Although there were occasional attempts to address issues arising from the existence of the Treaty, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries successive governments and their officials, including the judiciary, pursued policies of integration which led to assimilation and absorption of Māori into the dominant 'colonial' culture and philosophy. That the government of the day normally set the agenda on its own terms meant they drove the rhetoric and shaped the social construct: illustrated by, for example, The Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal itself, together with the principles of the Treaty and partnership.

Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal

Inaugurated in 1975 as a commission of inquiry to hear Māori claims and advise on future actions, the Tribunal had to determine what the 'principles of the Treaty' were and take into account the 'moral obligation' of the Treaty. It is an advisory rather than a legislative body. Interpretative processes have evolved that affect many areas including education. Much historical work has ensued, in both the recording and writing down of colonial history and of Māori customary and ancestral law (much of which was hitherto oral, or as constructed or interpreted by Pākehā [non-Māori] missionaries, anthropologists, and historians).

However, the mandate under which the Tribunal was constituted has its limitations. Its time frame was too limited; so in 1985 the task of the Tribunal was extended to cover retrospectively claims to 1840. The Tribunal was constructed basically within a post-colonial framework. It can only make recommendations to the government, who can either delay, ignore, modify, or enable these by enacting them into legislation. Negotiation with the claimants is involved. However, the power including the decisions around the form of compensation is still under the hegemonic control of the dominant culture.

There is increasing dissatisfaction by many concerning this whole process of reparative, distributive, and cultural justice and the associated claims. Some tribes are now making claims directly with the government. Other Māori are arguing that the debate needs to be centred around the Bill of Rights, or the Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, or the common law doctrine of aboriginal title, in particular the role of tikanga (Māori law and custom) (Durie, 2003; Law Commission, 2001). Questions are being asked as to whether a process that, since 1985, concentrates on the concerns of the past is the best way forward. This in turn raises issues around the place of the Treaty itself in contemporary life and for future

directions, which Graham Smith (1997) characterises as 'a crisis of legitimisation with respect to the Treaty of Waitangi' (p. 285).

Principles of the Treaty

Currently, many refer to the 'spirit' or 'intent' of the Treaty. Besides implying a critical judgement on the limitations of the original document (including a tortured hermeneutical process), this position arises from a desire to relate the Treaty to the contemporary situation. This approach is also applicable to the so-called 'principles' of the Treaty, which are enacted both in governmental regulations (since 1986), and in organisations including the 1992 revised Constitution of the Anglican Church.

Nevertheless, what is meant by the 'principles of the Treaty'? The government has here abrogated its responsibility and given room to a range of authorities to define what could be meant in particular locii. Contemporary interpreters are following the hermeneutical tenet of not being confined to the original (1840) context, nor to a literal and limiting analysis of words, nor to forcing the document into a legalistic straight-jacket (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2001).

However, the subsequent vagueness, disparity and ambiguity of interpretations (as reflected in legislation, jurisprudence and real life) raise the question whether both the 'spirit' and the 'principles' are useful and definitive concepts on which to base legislation and policy, including educational theory and practice.

Partnership

It is clear that the Waitangi Tribunal in the 1980s was seeing partnership exercised with the utmost good faith as *a*, if not *the*, fundamental provision of the Treaty. Even though the Anglican Report of 1986, referring back to a Discussion Document of 1984, suggested that the Treaty derived principles of partnership and bi-cultural development promoted in the latter document were seen then as 'tentative', that Church adopted these two principles as foundational for the future life of that church (Anglican Church, 1986). Judge Eddie Durie, until recently chair of the Waitangi Tribunal, attributed the concept of partnership to a Māori bishop of the Anglican Church, Manu Bennett. This concept was adopted subsequently by the government and the Court of Appeal (Durie, 1988). However, what the term 'partnership' means precisely in all these circumstances is open to some debate. Yet most Māori and liberal Pākehā commentators hold on to this as basic: namely that the Treaty is primarily concerned about the partnership between two sovereign peoples, the Pākehā and Māori. This tenet applies to all areas of society, including education.

Biculturalism

The principle of partnership, two peoples forming one nation, led to the principle of biculturalism. This was the product of an evolving reaction to the dominant monocultural (Pākehā) society. The promoting of the principle was the defining

moment for Māori, being seen as the way forward in order to come to terms with what it meant to be Māori, and for Pākehā, what it meant to live constructively with the indigenous people.

It was a time when cultural deprivation theories and deficit theories (victim blaming theories) were prevalent. ...Biculturalism was targeted at all New Zealanders and aimed to develop rudimentary understandings and practices of Maori culture within all New Zealand citizens – the outcome was to be citizens who were able to stand comfortably in two cultures (Smith, 1997, p. 386).

In 1984, for example, educational practices were instigated in order to educate children of both peoples within the school system in Māori tikanga (culture) and language, and to address the under-achievement of Māori children along with the ignorance of the Pākehā. However, the system was still Pākehā, and although it did improve the knowledge of that group of students, it was deemed a failure by most Māori as it failed to equip Māori to live as Māori in a Pākehā dominated society. This manifestation of biculturalism is a form of assimilation or acculturation where Māori cultural practices become tacked on to the dominant existing culture. This becomes little more than a form of hegemony and denial of sovereignty, and in effect encourages disempowerment and dispossession. Policies and approaches that attempt to rectify injustices are subsumed under Pākehā polity, with Māori as the disadvantaged minority.

From another perspective, biculturalism can recognise two peoples, one as tangata whenua, (the indigenous people of the land), and the other as manuhiri (guest), and with the former being guaranteed 'some autonomy and residual sovereignty' (Durie, 1993, p. 24), yet working together in partnership for the greater good of all.

There is considerable debate within cultural politics concerning the applicability and relevance of the term biculturalism in modern New Zealand (Durie, 1993; Kelsey, 1996; Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). As a government and church logistic, biculturalism was meant to address the philosophical, economic, social, and political needs of Māori. As understood within the Treaty hermeneutic, biculturalism accorded Māori a special status. At a structural level, it can mean anything from 'cultural awareness in the workforce to the promotion of autonomous Māori institutions for the expression of tino rangatiratanga [sovereignty]' (Fleras & Spoonley, p. 238). The term can be placed on a continuum of goals, structures, and policy outcomes, from a 'soft' to a moderate, to an inclusive, to a strong and finally to a 'hard' position; from an unmodified mainstream institution, to an attempt to introduce an increasing Māori protocol and component within the existing structure, to a partnership with active Māori involvement, to an independent but parallel Māori institute, and finally to a completely independent Māori institution.

The semantic usage of this term is summarised in Table 1, 'Forms of Biculturalism', developed from those of Durie (1993; 1995), Fleras & Spoonley (1999), Smith (1997), Smith, Smith & McNaughton (1999), and Cunningham (1999). A non-bicultural column 'denial' is included in order to complete the picture. It should also be noted that where 'monocultural' is read some would accept 'multicultural'

Table 1. Forms of biculturalism

Models	denial deficit model	'soft'; appeasement model	moderate; cultural model	inclusive; structural model	strong; diversity model	'hard'; separation model
Goals	conformity to pakeha culture, denying place of Māori culture	celebrating Māori culture language and tradition within society	improving race relations	partnership within institutions	separate but equal	Māori self determination, tino rangatiranga; challenging; the system; centres of resistance
Structures	status quo; western and 'colonial'	removal of discriminatory barriers and prejudice	a Māori perspective into the culture of an institution	active Māori involvement within the central mission of an institution	parallel institutions both committed to the same overall aims	Māori models of self-determination

Policy outcomes	retaining status quo; absorption; acculturation	incorporating Māori, mainstreaming; assimilation	accommodation; integration	responsiveness to the other; inclusivity; partnership	devolution of power, resources, and outcomes; self management; parallelism	autonomous institutions; self-determination
Treaty of Waitangi	historical; nullity or fraud irrelevant	Māori invited into colonial framework; cession	paternalistic parts to be honoured	partnership, as one people adaptable	partnership, but parallel; principles	essential for restorative justice; but indigenous rights way forward; spirit

in some instances. This is indeed either a reaction to, or a denial of, biculturalism, arguing that the ethnic mix of New Zealand society is now multicultural. Others impose a monocultural understanding that says all must conform to the norms inherited and developed from the nineteenth century colonial heritage.

There is also a cry from a few radical Māori to take this understanding further by proposing two separate, sovereign, political and geographical nations, with each having its own homeland. However, the solutions need to be realistic. The extreme positions on either side do not address the issues arising from the past, nor do they provide the way forward.

Rethinking Biculturalism

Some theorists, both Māori and Pākehā, argue that the term 'bicultural' is not at all helpful as a way forward for contemporary society, because the term is so loosely defined, because it means different things to different people, because it has an inherent dualistic language and assumptions leading to an adversarial polarity, and because its analysis of society is basically ethnic and racial and thus ignores other categories such as gender, class, economic disparities, and political orientation. Bicultural rhetoric is reactive to the assimilationist, integrationist agendas arising from colonial understandings, and the consequent acculturation of Māori. The term is locked into a particular era with all of its issues (such as finding an identity for Māori and righting the injustices of society). The solution was seen partly in a revisitation of the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi along with the particular interpretative scenario of partnership that acknowledges 'not only difference but also affinity' (Meredith, 1999, p. 305).

Post-Colonial Discourse

A way forward is to invoke post-colonial discourse. Sugirtharajah (2001) in his survey of post-colonial discourse suggests that there are three interactive streams or fields.

The first 'carries the notion of invasion and control' (p. 248). This stream exposes the discourse of the colonial as one of domination, control and of hegemony. Consequently there is the demand by the colonised for emancipation at various levels from the domination of and suppression by the invader. Much of the rhetoric in the middle of the twentieth century within New Zealand was driven by this social location. Two unequal entities were fighting for space, one seeking to impose, the other seeking liberation for their own souls and cultural identities. As Sugirtharajah points out, much of the language and imagery for the discourse and the epistemological assumptions were provided by the occupier. The Treaty in both its English and Māori versions fits into this mould.

The second stream concentrates 'on recovering the 'cultural soul' from the intellectual and cultural grip of the master.' Two approaches are utilised. The first is the attempt to recover the essence of the indigenous culture, including

revival of its language. The other approach is to expose the hegemony of the master, his wiles and any discourse that belittles the other party. Smith (1997) admits that the struggle by Māori demands working at an essentialist level with its positions of identity based on ethnicity and its conceptualisation of an indigenous culture and identity. This ethnicism is one of the weaknesses of this approach, especially when it thrives on the polarising categories of much of the bicultural discourse.

The third stream 'stresses mutual interdependence and transformation'. The emphasis 'is on the construction of an identity based on the intertwined histories of the coloniser and the colonised' (Sugirtharajah, 2001, p. 249). In New Zealand, two recent critics can be placed in this stream, Rata and Meredith.

Meredith, utilising the post-colonial cultural discourse of Homi K. Bhabha (2004), especially the concepts of hybridity, liminality and Third Space, argues that there needs to be more inclusivity rather than exclusivity, and a more multi-faceted rather than dualistic pattern of 'cultural exchange and maturation'. The mutual and mutable space between the coloniser and the colonised 'initiates new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation' (Bhabha, as cited in Meredith, 1999). This 'Third Space' does not arise from any attempt at assimilation, integration or a binary partnership, but 'emerges from an analytical scrutiny of diverse cultures ...and lays weighty emphasis on critical exchanges and mutual transformation between the two' (Sugirtharajah, 2001, pp. 249–250).

Rata (2000; 2001; 2003) analyses the chronological shifts that have occurred in New Zealand with respect to the issue of biculturalism within the wider context of global capitalism. The early understanding of biculturalism in her opinion was one of cultural recognition and inclusion, and is well articulated in the phrase 'one nation, two peoples'. Then there was a response that focussed on ethnic identity, both what it meant to be the indigene (Māori), and also in opposition referent to this, what it meant to be Pākehā. This 'bi-ethnicism' became politicised in the mid 1980's with the government-Māori (tribal) partnership becoming the interpreting rhetoric. The principles of the Treaty (and the spirit) replace the provisions of the Treaty. Within a decade, nevertheless, 'biculturalism had been replaced as a societal ideal by retribalisation on the Maori side, and an 'embourgeoisement' and class closure by many of the Pakeha new professional class' (Rata, 2000, p. 172), leading to neotribalism of Māori. Rata argues that there is confusion between ethnic identity and culture. If the two are identified, then this increases the bifurcation, based on genetic grounds, of society. However, if distinct, then there is room for creating a future that is not predicated on ethnic definitions and boundaries. This is reinforced by the arrival of recent migrant groups that supports her claim for that middle space to create 'a national 'kiwi' identity.' This could be identified as the 'Third Space'.

In both the approaches of Meredith and Rata, the future lies not in the Treaty of Waitangi (still needed to address the inherited injustices such as the confiscations of land in the 1860's), but in building on and incorporating the cultures of the ethnic groups which now reside in this land. Meredith and Rata are not alone in questioning the strict biculturalism arising out of a 'politically correct' interpretation

of the Treaty, which forms much of debate and policy not only in education, but also in the working of contemporary society. Much of current educational (including theological) ideology works out of either the 'inclusive' or 'strong' forms of biculturalism.

Education

As an integral part of this historical turmoil and interpretation, education took a key place. Questions raised included: What kind of education? Who determined the curriculum? The pedagogy? The research models? How do all these questions explicate what is meant by partnership and biculturalism under the Treaty of Waitangi? (See Table 2). Two models in particular reveal both the tensions and possibilities in the context of theological education.

Kaupapa Māori

Illustrative of Sugirtharajah's second stream is the Māori specific educational institutions from pre-school to tertiary levels, which deliver a uniquely Māori derived education, which stands apart from, and sometimes in resistance to, the state derived (first stream) educational system. The whole movement is termed Kaupapa Māori, and arises from within Māori philosophy, world-view and cultural principles and is being extended into social policy and jurisprudence. (e.g. Henry, 2000; Law Commission, 2001; Smith, 1997; 2003; Smith, Fitzsimons, & Roderick, 1998; Tau, Ormsby, Manthei & Potiki, 2003). It may be summarised succinctly as 'by Māori, for Māori, about Māori' (Bevan-Brown, 1999). Graham Smith (1997; 2003) and L. Smith (1999) are at great pains to stress that this movement is not only a praxis-focussed movement; it also develops a kaupapa Māori critical theory to align with and underpin the praxis. Although much of this theory is developed from within Māori tikanga with its own knowledge and pedagogy, it is also informed by critical theory from the wider world, in particular Freire (Smith, 1997; 1999) and Gramsci (1994). G. Smith makes considerable use of Freire's model for making people more fully human through entering into the cycle of conscientiousness, resistance and transformative action. He takes this further and argues that these are not in an instrumentalist, lineal progression, with one being prerequisite or contingent on the other as in Western thinking. Rather, they are cyclical and dynamic, and can be held simultaneously. All are important, but individuals or groups may enter the cyclical process of struggle at any point. This is reinforced by the experience of Māori. Significant is Freire's emphasis on the relationship between praxis, language, experience, power, identity, social location, along with education being an 'active agent of social change' (McLaren, 1996, p. 125).

The Treaty of Waitangi plays a significant role in giving permission to develop Māori's own taonga, unique gifts and insights. It has allowed the 'space' in which Māori might grow and explore their own identity and role in the bicultural context of Aotearoa and New Zealand, and indeed in the global world. The guidelines

Table 2. Forms of biculturalism with in education

Models	denial deficit model	'soft'; appeasement model	moderate; cultural model	inclusive; structural model	strong; diversity model	'hard'; separation model
Educational outcomes	monocultural educational system	monocultural with a Māori tangential overlay	te taha Māori, add on into existing system	bilingual units and wānanga within schools and institutions	kura kaupapa Māori and wānanga alongside parallel monocultural	kohanga reo movement
Theological Education	western and monocultural	include some Māori custom	taking seriously Māori custom and courses	working in tandem within the same institution; St John's College; School of Theology	Tāpapa (Anglican)	(traditional) wānanga
Research methodology	not recognizing Māori as participants or subjects, and no specific impact on Māori	Māori as subjects; benefits for society, or needs base restitution	Māori as subjects and as junior members of research teams;	Māori as significant participants; alongside mainstream standards; produces Māori knowledge and benefits	research team predominantly Māori; approach, methods, expectations and standards are Māori; but some accountability on use of public funds	research team exclusively Māori; approach, methods, expectations, and standards are Māori; resourced by own funds

produced by Tau, Ormsby, Manthei and Potiki (2003) offer practical suggestions for Pākehā and Māori working together as 'Treaty partners'. This is reflected in structure, environment, content, kawa (custom) curriculum and delivery (pedagogy). In all these areas, space needs to be created. However, they are critical of some Māori theorists who would argue that traditional Māori knowledge (mātauranga) is a knowledge system that needs to be taught along with contemporary realist-objective worldviews. They argue that 'mātauranga Māori is a belief system, rather than a knowledge system' (Tau et al., p. 15), and more suited to the 'seminary' rather than the University. This system is not congruent with a modern knowledge world. Its 'primary purpose is to act as a social bonding agent, rather than to offer an explanatory theory that better represents what occurs in nature' (Tau et al., p. 18). As a cultural construct it still deserves preservation and study, on the understanding that Māori as 'the Treaty Partner is the legitimate representative of Māori knowledge and belief systems' (Tau et al., p. 55). Others have argued that the Euro-centric nature of Western knowledge systems and the research paradigms utilised have all undermined Māori and all indigenous cultures and that Māori along with indigenous cultures need to reclaim control over indigenous ways of knowing and research (e.g. Bishop, 1996; L. Smith, 1999). Mason Durie says succinctly that the only role for the state is a 'facilitatory' one. He continues, 'Māori leaders have insisted that Māori knowledge, and Māori heritage generally, belong to Māori and must form the seed from which positive Māori development can grow' (Durie, 1998, p. 79). The issue, significant for educational philosophy and theological education, is whether this development can be done in the contemporary world in a 'space' which will lead to mutual advancement and interaction, or whether the 'space' will lead to divisionary and firm boundaries that make it increasingly difficult to live and advance together.

Anglican Theological Education

The Anglican Church in New Zealand has been involved in education since the early nineteenth century. St. John's College was founded in 1843 'as a place of religious and useful education for all classes of the community, and especially for Candidates for Holy Orders' (Selwyn, as cited in Tucker, 1879, I, p. 135). It was to supply the needs of both Māori and the settlers, and also to resource the peoples of the southern Pacific. Independent of the College, the Church further fostered education among children by setting up a series of boarding schools meant for Māori and encouraging Māori culture. These have often been criticised for being too Pākehā, with a Māori veneer.

The approaches developed specifically within current theological education evolved as the Church reviewed rigorously over several years the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi not just for society as a whole but also for its life and constitution. In 1984, a Commission was constituted by the Anglican Church to examine the implications of the Treaty for the Church. The principles of partnership and

bicultural development derived from the Treaty became entrenched in its constitution and fostered a diversity of approaches to theological education.

Te Rūnanga o Te Pīhopatanga o Aotearoa (The Council of the Bishopric of Aotearoa) in its submission to the Commission stated:

The Council asks the Commission to set out clearly for the Church an understanding of the concepts of tangata whenua and manuhiri, so as to overcome the problems associated with the treatment of Maori as manuhiri, or honoured guests, in a Church which was Maori in the beginning in Aotearoa (Anglican Church, 1986, Appendix C).

In 1992, the Anglican Church restructured itself uniquely into a system and with a polity that implemented three equal Tikanga/cultural streams: Maori, Pakeha and Pasefika (Anglican Church, 2001). It melded a bicultural model into a tripartite structure, but one honouring at all times the priority of the indigenous people, the Māori.

This revised Constitution of the Church means that Anglicans

- are covenanted to implement the principle of partnership between Tikanga Māori, Tikanga Pākehā and Tikanga Pasefika, and also the principle of bicultural development.
- are required to relate to each other as equals.
- participate in a common life that is an expression of partnership.
- are empowered to carry on its mission within the respective Tikanga and the structures each Tikanga adopts, as well as in the common life (Anglican Church, 2001).

The new Constitution is described by Bishop Muru Walters (2002) as one that 'recognises the need to redeem the Church's unjust treatment of Maori over many years. This redemptive theological model enables the Church to say sorry, seek forgiveness and reconciliation for its historical injustice to Māori'.

Although the Constitution itself does not stress the significance of the Treaty, its supportive and subsequent documents and discussion do. Examination of these suggests that the isolation of the two principles partnership and bicultural development owes more to the accepted thinking and rhetoric of the 1970s and 1980s than to a theological perspective. Even though these principles are declared to be 'consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ' (Anglican Church, 1986, p. 25) this is not developed. Key theological principles such as equity, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation, which would be a more constructive way forward, are virtually ignored. More theological integrity would explore the theological principles listed above as well as others such as unity in Christ, creation of humanity under God, whilst still addressing the issues of brokenness, injustice, and racialism. The Anglican Constitution should not be fossilised in the rhetoric of the 1980s. The criticisms of those such as Rata and Meredith are just as applicable to the thinking of the church as to society as a whole.

The Anglican Constitution has been interpreted (in ways that parallel what is occurring in New Zealand society) by some Māori and Pākehā as allowing bicultural development; both groups were able to work independently in a prescribed direction for themselves without interference from the other, especially any hegemony on the part of Pākehā (Second Stream). Others interpret bicultural development as both Māori and Pākehā engaged together, enabling each other's development, but in partnership, within the same location, thus creating something unique to the New Zealand Anglican context (Third Stream). The Pacific tikanga complicates the whole matter.

Whichever approach was taken (see Table 2), institutions and structures that had in effect been paternalistic, Western, and basically monocultural, have had to explore the implications of the Constitution for themselves. Each tikanga was free to explore its own expression of ministry and ministry training (Te Paa, 2000).

Differing Approaches within Tikanga Māori

For Tikanga Māori, both stances are reflected in education at all levels, although limited resources hinder their full development. In theological education, Tikanga Māori explored for themselves what forms of ministry were needed, and what kind of training would best serve those forms. Under the banner of Te Whare Wānanga o te Pīhopatanga o Aotearoa (The House of Learning of the Bishopric of Aotearoa), two main directions were developed in Theological Education. The first led to the founding of the Tāpapa. This arose from the desirability that Māori have a choice of options that met their requirements, including the development of a theology and the practice of ministry to speak out and into context, and the necessity to design a researched based curriculum that is clearly Māori in pedagogy, content, and outcomes. The Tāpapa is an association of Māori Colleges that offers qualifications, not only in theology, but also in other aspects of life. Its offerings include a considerable number of short courses, as well as degree courses up to Master's level.

The courses of study cover theology, ministry, pastoral care and iwi-hapu (tribal) studies with a Christian and a tikanga Māori base. Structurally this approach is similar to that of the Kaupapa Māori movement described above. It has similar strengths, and is subject to similar affirmations and criticisms. It too speaks out of a Freirean analysis of society and of pedagogy. In its curriculum, although it is informed by traditional Māori philosophy, world-view and cultural principles, there is still a strong traditional Christian base and focus although expressed through a Freirean lens. Some traditional Pākehā members of the Church, working under the mis-apprehension that there is universality in theology and a fixed received tradition, utilise the word syncretism for this approach. This term does not encourage dialogue or any working together; nor does it address the complexity of the inter-relationship of tradition, location, and trans-culturality. There is a dialectical relationship between tradition and culture. The Tāpapa movement is addressing

the needs of the Māori members of the Church, and it finds its truth, validation, authentication, and accountability in its community.

St. John's College and the School of Theology, the University of Auckland

The other significant approach to theological education is at work at St John's College, which has been the Church's primary residential theological educational site since 1843. It is currently linked with the University of Auckland, through the School of Theology. This is a partnership with the University and four Church Colleges, Trinity Methodist, Carey Baptist, Catholic Institute of Theology (lay training), and the Anglican St John's College. The School of Theology provides the academic curriculum for all these Colleges. The issues around bicultural theological education have given rise to much discussion over ecumenical boundaries. The result is a new curriculum inaugurated in 2006 in which the Western inherited paradigms of theological education are challenged. The School is committed to 'the provision of bicultural education expressive of the partnership with Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand which derives from the Treaty of Waitangi' (School of Theology, 2002, p. 1). If one accepts the centrality of the Treaty, any biculturally based education, including theological, needs to honour the Treaty and the associated hermeneutic. This applies to curriculum, pedagogy, structures, and decision making processes 'which reflect the responsibilities and obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi' and which honour Māori as the indigenous people of the land.

As far as St John's is concerned, this College has evolved, as a result of the Constitution, from having a basically mono-cultural ethos to a three-tikanga on-going enterprise, in which each member college identifies personally with a tikanga, and yet each one of them is an integral part of the whole.

Three colleges were constituted reflecting the tikanga nature of the Church, all under the banner of St John's College: Te Rau Kahikatea (1991), College of the Diocese of Polynesia (1998), and, in 1991, the College of the Southern Cross (Pākehā). The Heads of the three Colleges have an equivalent role with respect to their individual college, and as Heads, they act as a triumvirate (Te Paa, 2001). As the result of a recent report on the future of the College (College of St. John the Evangelist, 2004) the Board of the College in March 2005 decided that there should be one overall head of St John's College, who would support the three heads of the individual colleges as *primus inter pares*. This change appears partly in response to the perceived need of a managerial model in order to expedite development, rather than the slower consensus model represented by the preceding situation. However, at the subsequent meeting of the Board in June, 2005, this decision was overturned, mainly because of fears that the voices of the marginalised, namely Māori and Polynesian, might in turn be silenced by the numerically and historically dominant Pākehā.

St John's College is declared by the Church to be 'a site of excellence in theological scholarship and leadership, cultural aspect and spiritual inspiration'

(Anglican Church, 1998, p. 44). The Mission Statement of the College states that the educational purpose is to provide 'quality bicultural theological education in the context of New Zealand and Polynesia' (College of St. John the Evangelist, 2005). Three publics need to be addressed in a theological institution: society, academy and the Church as the people of God. In developing an ethos, a direction, and a curriculum, a number of key questions have been, and continue to be, debated.

What are the Integrating Principles in this Institution?

Integration acknowledges different voices and identities. Within the present location, the key ones are those based on the three tikanga: Māori, Pākehā and Polynesian. Each tikanga has its own story, which it brings into the common enterprise in order to contribute to the development of a distinctive theology and spirituality for Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia. This is done by honouring the distinctive contexts: historical, ecclesial, geographical, cultural; by honouring the received tradition; by engaging with contemporary perspectives; and by ongoing development in partnership. Otherness is to be confronted, diversity respected, and togetherness explored. The principle of partnership is key, a principle, which is central to the Treaty of Waitangi, and one, which is biblically and theologically driven.

Further, the three publics of society, academy and church are integrated through a curriculum in which the discourse of theology is to address all three publics, by a theology which is academically respectable, a message which enables the members of the church to engage with the demands of the gospel, proclaiming its prophetic witness and encouraging social activism for justice and reconciliation.

Which Hermeneutical Principles should be Adopted?

The basis of any hermeneutic is the ability to read and interpret any text or tradition, be it from the past or concurrent with the interpreter. For theological educators the task is to read and re-image the inherited story from within the bicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand. The social location of the educator drives the hermeneutic. Difference is again acknowledged and the individual hermeneutic, be it kaupapa Māori or Western based, is brought to the partnership context in order that something unique be transformed into Sugirtharajah's Third Stream. A new kaupapa of reciprocity, redemptive justice and conscientisation, resistance and transformative action emerges. This must be post-colonial, bicultural, and appropriately bilingual. The hermeneutic is

...rooted in critical and communal reading of the Bible that seeks to discern the presence of the life-giving God in a suffering world ...It is a reflection on God's transforming action in an increasingly globalised world. It is prophetic and critical, hopeful and life-affirming. It participates in Jesus' solidarity with the marginalised and privileges their voices. It ...fosters engagement and action (Anglican Indigenous Theologians Network, 2003; College of St. John the Evangelist, 2005).

What are the Consequences for Missiology?

The College exists to provide theological education, ministry training and formation that are to advance the mission and ministry of the Church in the locations of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia. It aims to develop Christian leaders as critical thinkers capable of exercising transformative ministry to meet the needs of each tikanga as it seeks to express the gospel in its location and in the world.

The tasks of such leaders include:

1. proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ;
2. teaching, baptising and nurturing believers;
3. responding to human needs by loving compassionate service;
4. seeking to transform the unjust structures of society;
5. striving to safeguard the integrity of creation and working to sustain and renew the life of the earth

(This is based on the Anglican Consultative Council's Statement, 1984, [Anglican Consultative Council, 1985] and incorporated into the Constitution of the Church.)

Here the creative tension at St. John's is to respect and honour the particular aspirations and contexts of each tikanga as it works out the implications of these generic statements in different contexts, and yet attempt to educate together in partnership.

What are the Consequences for Pedagogical Principles?

These arise from the emancipatory constructs expressed in the Constitution of the Church, which in turn build on the principles derived from the Bible and from the Treaty of Waitangi. Again, the pedagogical principles of each tikanga are to be honoured and in partnership, something creative and new ensues. For example, the use of oral history and stories is fundamental to Polynesian and Māori education. Kaupapa Māori has developed its own teaching, assessment and research methodologies that arise out of its own culture and principles derived from the Treaty of Waitangi such as partnership, participation, protection and empowerment. Pedagogy needs to develop a critical consciousness that is transformative, praxis based, and addresses the connections between social location, knowledge, authority, power, hegemony, domestication, resistance and justice. The starting point is the individual in context rather than the authoritative expert enforcing specific content based knowledge on to the passive learner.

There is deep commitment both to the transformative values of the gospel and to the Treaty and its principles in the Church and in the College. The faculty in consultation with other educators within the Church are in the process of developing curriculum and papers that will reflect this ethos. All Pākehā teaching staff have committed themselves to a programme of upskilling in Māori language and culture. The College has a policy of developing and appointing teaching staff from the Māori people and from the Pacific. It is currently developing a foundation course

that will pick up issues referred to in the statements and definitions enunciated above, and is exploring the possibility of a new award along the same lines.

Conclusion

An issue which arises in addressing past wrongs, particularly in the context of the Treaty of Waitangi, is that of one-sided 'partnership'. Understood thus (as it has until recently), it is easily absorbed into an assimilationist mode. Both Māori and Pākehā need the space to explore, to define whom they are, and as Christians to envisage a Christ who is relevant to them. This can easily lead to a form of separatism, and a denial of the colonial oppressor in favour of the oppressed finding his or her freedom. Yet, for a partnership to work there needs to be a mutual respect for each other, and a willingness to learn from each other. As part of the one land, all residents can contribute their own story into a distinctive theology and spirituality for Aotearoa New Zealand.

The significance of Treaty based relationships, and the unique place of the indigenous 'people of the land', make multiculturalism of a different order in the context of theological education, whether Christian or not. It has a more sociological focus than biculturalism that is more politically motivated. The needs of all ethnic groups still have to be taken into account when discussing education and forming curriculum.

Theological education can be transformative for people, structures, and cultures. Any transformation in education is not simply a revision of the curriculum in an attempt to meet the needs of differing cultures. There needs to be a transformation of curriculum, pedagogy and the teachers. It is extremely difficult for individuals to decode themselves and to shift paradigms. 'We had not realised how much faculty would need to unlearn racism to learn about colonisation and decolonisation and to fully appreciate the necessity for creating a democratic liberal arts learning experience' (hooks, 1994, pp. 37–38).

Any curriculum revision needs to release the 'cultures of silence'. As Freire constantly reiterates education is *by* or *with*, not *for* the oppressed people who struggle to regain their humanity (Freire, 1983). Education enhances what he calls the 'ontological vocation' of humanity. This is applicable to the individual and to society. The Māori voice had begun to be silenced. It has been released over the past thirty years.

However, the reality of New Zealand society is that although individuals or groups may be able to decode, decolonise and decentre, society as a whole (and the Church in particular) are not always ready to do so. What is important is that 'it is crucial that critical thinkers who want to change our teaching practices talk to one another, collaborate in a discussion that crosses boundaries and creates a space for intervention' (hooks, 1994, p. 129). This is what the challenge is at both St John's College and the School of Theology. It is a slow process. It is hoped that a new and exciting curriculum and pedagogy will develop into a unique 'Third Space', which will give voice to the silent, and which will enable the silent not only to

speak for themselves, but to those who have silenced them. Such a 'Third Space' might transform society and individuals and enable Christians to serve God in the world in which difference is celebrated: and also one commonality in difference.

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SECTION THREE

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION THREE: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Kathleen Engebretson

Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Australia

Theory in Religious Education

The word ‘theory’ is used to designate the self understanding of a discipline, an ‘explanation of the principles underlying its practice’ (Burgess, 1996, p. 15). It is the response given to the questions: ‘What is this discipline about? What is its nature and purpose?’ Confusion about theory within a discipline, or perhaps, more exactly, confusion about the particular branch of theory to which one adheres, necessarily leads to confusion of intention in teaching, to confusion in teaching practice, and finally to confused students. Wyckoff (1959) summarises the principle succinctly:

Consistency in the relationship between theory and practice is absolutely indispensable for the effectiveness, expansiveness, and fruitfulness of a practice in any domain whatsoever.

I find it helpful to characterise the wide ranging field of theory about religious education as a series of ongoing and at times overlapping conversations (Foster, 2003), each most meaningful within its own context, be this educational, ecclesial or societal. Within these conversations theory is made and re-made, the conversations drawing on the known, the familiar, the established, to forge new understandings and new knowledge as the world becomes more complex and plural. In this section of the *International Handbook of the Religious, Spiritual and Moral Dimensions of Education* five conversations are represented which often flow into each other, but which are distinguishable by the context within which the conversation takes place, by the issues that they represent and, to a large extent, by the people and institutions that conduct them. For the sake of mapping the conversations throughout this section of the Handbook, I would like to broadly characterise them as 1) philosophical, theological and ecclesial conversations; 2) phenomenological

conversations; 3) conversations concerning the interface between religious, spiritual and moral education; 4) conversations about the educational nature of religious education; and 5) conversations about religious education beyond the school. These are simply labels, but while they are inadequate descriptions of the discourses whose richness becomes apparent as the section unfolds, they provide a convenient classification within which to map the field of theory in religious education.

Philosophical, Theological and Ecclesial Conversations

Philosophical Issues that Concern Religious Education

The six contributors to the first part of this section converse about the philosophical, theological and ecclesial dimensions of religious education. The first chapter by William Kay is a fitting introduction to the field, for it raises central issues about the nature of religious education in particular contexts. Kay begins with an analysis of the generic philosophical problems raised by teaching religion, and is concerned with the effectiveness of the answers that have been given by representative writers. He shows how religious and secular theorists formulated their contributions to religious education, while recognising that political and cultural conditions stand behind the expression and motivations of these approaches. Kay's conclusion is that while religious education may be a vehicle for the transmission of the beliefs of a religious tradition, it can also address the pressing issues of the time, thus contributing to the development of an improved global community.

Nipkow takes up this conversation, again providing a wide-ranging discussion, which identifies and analyses issues that surround the theory and practice of religious education across Europe. Like Kay, he is aware of the tensions between the individual and community aspects of religions and how these interplay in societies. The complexities of religious education practice within these sometimes competing, yet interrelated, pressures are discussed within the framework of contemporary European education, and against the background of Protestant history.

Nipkow's insight is that learning is 'self-formation', dependent on encounter and interaction with tradition from the past, challenge in the present, and vision for the future. Like Kay he rejects indoctrinatory theories of religious education yet allows the role of religious traditions in both handing on and interpreting their particular cultures. He rejects an over-emphasis on the development of personal faith in order to emphasise education through diversity. An educational and hermeneutical methodology, which recognises the truthfulness of existing world religions in their specific identity, is called for (Nipkow, 1998).

Hull's chapter, *Religion, Violence and Religious Education*, models the point made specifically by Kay and implicitly by Nipkow, that religious education, while faithfully interpreting religious traditions, and educating in their own emphases and culture, can and must make a difference to the world. He examines the historical links between religions and violence, notes the close relationship between violence and exclusivist religion, and calls for this to be countered in religious education

through an 'anti-religionist' religious education, which would be comparable to the anti-racist and anti-sexist movements in education of recent years. This would challenge educators to consider the appropriateness of single faith as opposed to multi-faith groups, open rather than closed approaches to content, examination of a range of religions rather than one, and the interplay between religious education and responsible citizenship. In exposing the links between violence and religions, and devising ways that religious education can contribute to peace, Hull illustrates that religious education has a social and global function that goes far beyond a transmission model.

Theological and Ecclesial Theories of Religious Education

Burgess (1996; see also Seymour and Miller, 1990; Boys, 1989; Moore, 1991) has classified the field of theological and ecclesial theories of religious education, proposing five models, to peruse the theorists who have contributed to the conversation about religious education as ecclesial and theological. The first of these he calls the *historic prototype*, which prevailed throughout the first nineteen centuries of Christianity, and whose function was initiation and socialisation into the Church. Burgess points out that the writers, teachers, philosophers of this theory were some of the great names of Christian history. They included Clement of Alexandria (150–215), Origen (182–254), Cyril of Jerusalem (210–386), Augustine of Hippo (354–430), Benedict of Nursia (480–543), Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Martin Luther (1483–1546), John Calvin (1509–1564), Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), John Comenius (1592–1670), John Wesley (1703–1791) and John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801–1890). The similarity of world-view of the prevailing thinkers and educators of this long period meant that religious education was exclusively concerned with the communication of revealed truth. Essentially this historic prototype is found within the documents about religious education of the Roman Catholic Church. Addressed mostly to bishops, they are concerned with schools only in limited ways, and in this section of the Handbook. Fleming points out the problems about assumptions and language that can occur when they are used to provide theoretical norms in schools. He finds that, embedded in Church documents, is the assumption of a religious socialisation function for religious education, and, arguing that schools are far more than agents of socialisation, he calls for a broader and more complex theory of religious education within the Catholic school. Moreover, Fleming finds a certain lack of consistency in the use of language about religious education in these documents, a lack of consistency that can indicate confusion in theory. Educators who look to these documents as primary sources, Fleming argues, often find it difficult to arrive at a precise meaning for 'religious education'.

As the twentieth century began, the historic prototypal theory gave way to what Burgess terms the *classical liberal model of religious education*, a theory that grew from the 'optimistic, classical liberalism that shaped the religious education scene' (1996, p. 76) during the first decades of the twentieth century. This theory

gave primary attention to the functioning of individuals within society, and thus was scientific and practical rather than concerned with communicating salvific truth. In the company of educational philosophers such as Pestalozzi (1746–1827), Froebel (1782–1853, 1905), Bushnell (1802–1876, 1967) and Dewey (1859–1952, 1916) such religious education theorists as Coe (1917), Fahs (1952), Bower (1925), Case (1924), Betts (1912, 1919, & 1925), Athearn (1920) and Chave (1947) developed a theory of religious education that saw it as a process, rather than the seeking of a product, and that attended to analysis of current social issues in order to hear the direction to be taken in Christian response. English's chapter in this section of the Handbook is an excellent illustration of this model. He argues that the 'conservative or reproductive hermeneutic' that is still often favoured by religious institutions, and is spelled out in the documents of the Catholic Church, is at odds with the critical hermeneutic that *de facto* exists in schools, and that much more readily educates for change. Drawing on Newman (1845), English argues that religious education is the process that allows the development of doctrine in the Church, a process that is as valid because it belongs to the People of God as the deliberations of the Church hierarchy. It goes beyond the perceived necessity to communicate revealed truth, to a critical reflection on faith and culture that will contribute to the understanding of the whole People of God about what Christian belief and practice mean. The tradition is therefore preserved by constant interpretation.

In her chapter Hunt looks to the larger arena of education, and declares that all education is essentially religious, even if its religious character is not always explicit. Her argument is theological and is based on an understanding of the term 'religious' that refers to the human capacity for the sacred, and on an understanding of education as the acquiring of a wisdom which permeates the person's whole life. Human beings' capacity and drive to know, reason and understand, a capacity and drive that is manifested in commitment to a search for truth, is, she argues, a religious capacity and drive. When education is at its best, going beyond an outcomes or training preoccupation, this religious capacity is nurtured, and so education is a religious endeavour.

Phenomenological Conversations

The two chapters within this conversation deal with the phenomenological theory of religious education. The 'religious studies movement' which introduced a phenomenological theory of religious education to the world, expanded theory in religious education beyond the domination of the Christian tradition, giving it an inter-faith dimension. The genesis of this was the Butler Act of 1944 in England, which made religious education compulsory in all county schools, and led to intense reflection on the nature of religious education in a pluralistic society. The history of this reflection through the agreed syllabuses, and their gradual adaptation of the phenomenological theory of religious education, is documented in its historical, philosophical and sociological aspects by Engebretson. Her chapter on phenomenology examines its history and context, outlines its methodological

principles, shows this methodology in practice and critiques contemporary debates about this theory of religious education.

The phenomenological theory of the study of religion has been extremely influential in Britain, Europe and Australia, where it has presented a non-judgmental way of studying religions as phenomena of human existence, and thus of contributing to greater understanding and tolerance of the religious groups within a local community. The British scholar, Grimmitt (1973; 1983; 1987; 1991; 2000), argued for greater attention to the purpose of religion, which is related to the search for meaning, and his work has helped teachers to use religious phenomena to encourage students to explore ultimate questions. The overview of Grimmitt's theory of religious education is again presented by Engebretson in its historical, philosophical and sociological aspects, and his socially constructivist theory of religious education, drawing as it does on phenomenology, is shown in practice. The two chapters in this section of the Handbook that deal with phenomenology of religion propose theoretical approaches to religious education for the multi-faith world.

Conversations Concerning the Interface Between Religious, Spiritual and Moral Education

A great deal of theorising about religious education has arisen in response to secularisation, and the three authors who contribute to this conversation all respond to this phenomenon, albeit from different religious and geographical contexts. In a world influenced by the demise in authority of many religious traditions, spirituality and faith are no longer controlled and exclusively mediated by religious traditions. Paradoxically, many argue, this has led to a kind of re-birth of spirituality, which is expressed in many new and diverse ways. 'Post modern societies ...are characterised not by irreligion and disbelief, but by a rise in spiritualities not controlled by religious organisations, spiritualities beyond the scope of churches, mosques, temples and synagogues' (Bouma, 2000, p. 6). Hervieu-Leger (2000) sees value in the rise of the secular society and the resulting decline in formal religion, which, he argues, brings the possibility of reform and re-vivification to religious and spiritual thought. Certainly the post-modern diminishment of the authority of the 'package' of beliefs and practices offered by religious traditions has led to an eclectic construction of spiritual systems on the part of young people who may gather elements from a range of traditions to form a framework of meaning. In this vein, the Australian scholar, Rossiter, shows how the whole curriculum in the school can educate for the spiritual and moral dimensions of education that are no longer simply subsumed in the curriculum area of religious education, and also are no longer the exclusive domain of Churches. This may be done, he claims, through attention to the constructs of meaning, identity and spirituality. The constructs are described, and proposals for ways in which they may be addressed across the curriculum are given.

Blumberg's chapter, from the geographical context of the United States, and the religious context of liberal Judaism, is also set against the background of a

general decline in religious identification and practice. Like religious education in other traditions, the task of the Jewish school in the twenty first century is no longer exclusively perceived as the need to create a synthesis between the beliefs and practices of Judaism and the lives of the students. Recently secularisation has challenged this goal, and Jewish education is confronted with Jewish families whose values do not necessarily cohere with many of the basic assumptions upon which Jewish education is built. Blumberg sets out a new philosophical approach to liberal Jewish religious education, which is based upon the Talmudic injunction of Rabbi Eliezer: 'Know before whom you stand' (Berachot, 28b). In this approach the needs of all—students, parents, the Jewish tradition and institution—are balanced in a way that respects the context of each, allows for a genuine conversation and ensures that the Jewish tradition is brought into dialogue with young people's culture and goals, in ways that have the potential to promote their spiritual and ethical development.

Erriker is also concerned with the relationship between religious education and education for spirituality. He argues that in Britain the management of religious education in public schools by government bodies, the supervisory and inspection roles of these bodies, and the pressure on teachers to see their students conform to pre-ordained outcomes, has killed innovation and adventurous pedagogy in religious education. The culture of supervision and measurement has favoured the cognitive side of the subject but has neglected spiritual education, even though this is the area being given greatest attention currently by theorists and scholars. Erriker surveys the range of theories and pedagogies that have the potential to address spiritual education, and argues that this aspect of a whole religious education needs to be given greater attention, in a conversation between those who manage religious education in public schools and the theorists whose work focuses on education for spirituality.

The phenomenon of secularisation has led to fruitful theorising about the nature of religious education among its theorists and practitioners, and a renewed emphasis on the development of spirituality and morality, informed by a religious tradition or not, has been the result.

Conversations About the Educational Nature of Religious Education

Influenced to some extent by the religious studies movement, there has grown a theory of religious education in the Western world, which, in its adaptation of the religious studies emphasis into a theory which both accommodates particular attention to one religion, and has the potential to nurture religious faith, is particularly suitable for schools sponsored by a religious tradition. The five contributors to this conversation approach it again from varying perspectives and contexts, but emphasise religious education as an educational endeavour. This theory of religious education emphasises the norms of good education, noting that the work of the school is teaching and learning, therefore that attention should be given to providing religious education in the most educationally valid way. This educational approach

to religious education can provide a 'channel to faith through knowledge and understanding' (Rossiter, 1982) in the awareness that the spiritual journey is a life-long one, and that the period of school based religious education is only one influence upon it.

In Australia, Rummery (1975) was one of the first to argue for a systematic approach to teaching religion in an objective way, drawing content from both the home tradition and other religions. Rossiter (1981a; 1981b; 1985; 1988) has consistently argued that the intellectual study of religion is the most appropriate theory of religious education for the religious education classroom, and that this educational emphasis is most likely to meet the cognitive as well as catechetical and spiritual aims of the curriculum. In this section Malone develops this insight, referring to a 'paradigm shift' in religious education theorising. She documents the ways in which the role of the teacher, the learning approaches, the content and student interactions, the life contexts and experiences of teachers and students, have changed over a significant period of time. Malone illustrates the interrelationships between these factors and the extent to which changes to these factors have led to a changing paradigm in religious education.

In an educational theory of religious education the form and quality of teaching/learning resources is paramount, and Buchanan's chapter documents the movement to a prescribed series of textbooks in religious education in a particular Australian context. Embedded in this documentation are many insights about the management of change in religious education, the changes in pedagogy that come with a commitment to good education in religious education, and the particular role that textbooks can play in improving teaching and learning.

Groome's theory of religious education draws on critical education theory, especially that of Habermas (1972; 1974). His *Shared Christian Praxis* theory (1980; 1991), which he describes in the chapter he has contributed to this section of the Handbook, provides a critical and transformative approach to religious education, which brings the story and vision of the Christian community into critique of the present situation. His chapter is a clear theoretical and practical explication of this significant religious education theory, which has been particularly influential in Christian schools. In keeping with the authors of this part of the section, Groome is concerned that religious education be not only a vehicle for transformation, but also that it be excellent education. Crotty's study of leadership in school religious education, set in the Australian context, shares this concern. She finds that in leadership in this curriculum area there are particular tensions and anomalies that arise because of the perceived dual purpose of religious education leadership—that is that it is seen both as an exercise of ministry in a religious tradition and also as educational leadership. The two are not always compatible, and Crotty recommends a variety of measures that may be taken to clarify and differentiate the demands of religious leadership in the school.

Finally, in this part of the third section of the Handbook, Chater analyses the relationships between the personal faith of the religious education teacher and his or her role as a professional educator. He rejects the view that these are

incompatible and to be kept separate, and argues that when religious educators engage critically with the education system, address it from their own contexts and win its 'respectful attention for religious and spiritual realities', they help to change education, and also contribute to developments in the behavior and self-understanding of religions. Therefore, the dialogue benefits the education system, the religion itself and religious educators whose own faith is constantly critically re-assessed through their work.

As Chater argues:

In the contemporary religious world, religious adherents need an educational faith as much as educational systems need their ethical and spiritual presence; and religious and spiritual traditions, in order to survive and accentuate their most positive characteristics, need education as much as it needs them.

Conversations About Religious Education Beyond the School

Most of the contributions in this section of the Handbook assume religious education in the school curriculum, so it is important to hear the voices of those whose concern is with tertiary students and adults. Drawing generally on the theology of Lonergan (1972), Kelly discusses certain terms and categories that are applicable to adult faith development. The concepts of interiority, self-transcendence, conversion, meaning, Word, community, symbol and witness, are explained and woven together into a model that is proposed for adult religious education. Finally, Clifford argues for chaplaincy in universities from historical, theological, and psychological perspectives. While it is unlikely that all students will receive religious education at university, she argues, chaplaincy can provide religious education, and a variety of opportunities for worship and support in moral and faith development for students who desire these.

Conclusion

This introduction to this third section of the *Handbook of the Religious, Spiritual and Moral Dimensions of Education* has grouped the field of theory in religious education according to orientations that arise from particular issues, and in particular contexts. It has classified the various conversations about religious education that are represented in this section as 1) philosophical, theological and ecclesial conversations; 2) phenomenological conversations; 3) conversations concerning the interface between religious, spiritual and moral education; 4) conversations about the educational nature of religious education; and 5) conversations about religious education beyond the school. The first conversation represented in this section of the Handbook illustrates many of the philosophical issues that arise in conversations about religious education as well as the theological and ecclesial orientation often evident in these conversations. The second conversation focuses on phenomenology, a theory that arose in response to the multi-faith nature of world communities.

The third conversation has arisen in response to the issues of secularisation and postmodernism, while the fourth reflects responses to the demands of education on religious education conducted in school settings. The final conversation in the section observes the need for and approaches to religious education beyond the school. None of these conversations is entirely separate from any other, but for the purposes of this section the grouping may assist the reader to make their way through the challenging discussions that follow.

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PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF RELIGION IN SCHOOLS

William K. Kay

Director, Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies

Introduction

This chapter begins with an analysis of the generic philosophical problems raised by teaching religion (RE), and is concerned with the effectiveness of the answers that were produced by representative writers. It opens with an examination of Ninian Smart's early philosophical work and then considers subsequent developments within the field (in the work of Elmer Thiessen, Thomas Groome, British Humanists, and Andrew Wright) showing how these theorists formulated their contributions to RE, while at the same time recognising that political and cultural conditions stand behind the expression and motivations of their approaches.

Generic Problems

Religions characteristically make truth claims or, if they do not make these claims explicitly, presume them implicitly in relation to their vision of this world or the next. It is the contradictory nature of these truth claims that is problematic, since they either cannot all be true or, alternatively, they can all be true but in a way that is incompatible with other forms of truth claims. If we take a view that the truth claims of religion are similar enough to be placed in one general category then there is an inevitable clash between them either at the historical or at the metaphysical or para-historical levels, or all of these. The contrast between Christianity and Islam is most obviously found at the historical level in relation to claims about the crucifixion of Christ. The New Testament presumes this historical event repeatedly in nearly all the books of the canon. It is a presumption woven into the life of Christianity within its worship, its iconography, its preaching, its doctrine; and

cannot be removed without destroying the identity of the faith. Yet Islam, within its earliest foundation document, casts doubt on the crucifixion (Sura 4.157).

Similar disagreements occur in relation to the monotheistic religions and Indian religions over reincarnation and resurrection. Where there is reincarnation, there is no resurrection; and vice versa. The two concepts are mutually opposed. There is no possibility of teaching that resurrection might be a form of reincarnation or that reincarnation might occur through resurrection. This is because the identity of the individual is conceived in contrasting ways within the two theological schemes. In resurrection, the identity of the individual is retained and memory of pre-resurrection experience is carried forward into the post-resurrection life—at least this is so if Christ himself is seen as paradigmatic. Reincarnation does not make this assumption and, in any event, there are unresolved issues about what features of identity are transferred from one body to the next, or how this can be effected.

Not only are there conflicts of truth claims between religions, there also conflicts of truth claims between most religions and contemporary science. The most obvious ground on which this dispute is fought concerns the origin of the world and its geological age. Many religions believe the universe had a beginning in time and that all species owe their existence to a creator. Although there are differences about the exact claims made by religion in relation to the animal kingdom, most conservative elements within the monotheistic religions claim a special place for human beings. Or, to take another example, the monotheistic religions assert the existence of angels. Gabriel appears both in the New Testament and as the carrier of revelation to Mohammed. Angelic beings have never been subject to scientific scrutiny and are dismissed by contemporary science along with elves, fairies, goblins and leprechauns. Yet, most fundamentally, the dispute between science and religion concerns the existence of God as creator of the entire universe. Science already attempts to provide a comprehensive theory of the origin of the material universe, all life within it and the distribution of species. The Grand Unified Theory (even if not finally formulated) is intended to offer a total explanation of existence without recourse to a transcendent God outside and beyond the universe that is being explained (see <http://www.hep.yorku.ca/yhep/gut.html> or <http://www.grandunifiedtheory.org.il/>).

These conflicting truth claims engender complications for the teaching of world religions in schools. A democratic society made up of different religious groups might agree that it was best for:

- all religions to be taught as if they are true; or
- all religions to be taught as if they are false; or
- only one religion to be taught as if it is true; or
- all religions to be taught as if they make no truth claims; or
- all religions to be taught in a way that recognised the counterclaims of other religions.

The contestability of religious claims, as outlined above, produces specific pedagogic problems. It also introduces the possibility of a much more general

problem in relation to the teaching of religion. This is the accusation that religion inevitably concerns indoctrination, which is, according to Flew's definition, the teaching of doctrines of dubious veracity (Flew, 1972, p. 108; quoted by Theissen, 1993, p. 63). As we shall see, the concept and practice of indoctrination is itself open to debate but, in its simplest form, if indoctrination is said to be the teaching of propositions as if they are true even though they are not true, then religion may be open to the criticism that it is always indoctrinatory. Even if a weaker definition of indoctrination is used and if teaching methods are employed that avoid direct teaching about religious doctrine, it is still possible to make the case that some form of indoctrination is insidiously being perpetrated by the doctrinal implications of religious teaching within the classroom. In other words, pupils may infer that certain doctrines ought to be believed even if these doctrines are not explicitly part of the curriculum.

Smart's Contribution

Smart's early book (1966), *The Teacher and Christian Belief*, addresses many of these generic issues. He was concerned with the connection between Christian belief and the Bible, although his discussion could be applied to any religion that has foundational texts. While his position is dialectical in that he believes any proposition or assertion ought to be challenged by its opposite, he offers a clarificatory four-way system of classification. In respect of biblical authority he argues that it is possible to use the text *deductively* as a network of inter-locking propositions relating to the nature of God and human beings, and from this matrix to deduce beliefs. Alternatively, one can argue for the *inductive* view that provides an account of 'God's concrete historical acts and the testimony to these' (p. 19) and that this approach does not need to be concerned with verbal inspiration or the trappings of particular historical époques. While both deductivism and inductivism have disadvantages, the latter is much more open to scientific discoveries and less committed to fixed and historically indefensible interpretations.

The second polarity concerns *revelationism* and *liberalism*. Revelationism presumes the communication of transcendent truth to human beings without the interposition of contemporary culture or human knowledge, a view defended by Karl Barth (1975, CD, 2, 1, p. 168). Alternatively, a more liberal position is found when revelation is thought to operate in conjunction with naturally derived knowledge. Indeed, in the case of St Thomas Aquinas, a careful distinction is made between the different types of knowledge and the limits of one in relation to the other. This permits the coordination of religious and secular insights so as to produce a harmonious integration where the truths of religion are adapted to contemporary scientific and cultural knowledge.

As table one shows, these two poles can be combined to produce liberal inductivism, revelationist inductivism, liberal deductivism and revelationist deductivism. The point of Smart's analysis is to show how grounds for belief may be differently situated in relation to foundational texts and to demonstrate the plausibility

Table 1. Smart’s analysis of approaches to the biblical text

Approach to foundational text	Truth communicated by revelation	Truth coordinated with natural knowledge
Deductive	Revelationist deductivism	Liberal deductivism
Inductive	Revelationist inductivism	Liberal inductivism

of a position that is flexible in relation to contemporary knowledge. In this way he prepares for a rapprochement between science and religion and between one religion and another, while relativising any conflict between the two.

He goes further than this, though. In a description of the process by which scientific knowledge is achieved, he largely follows the account given by Karl Popper (1989). This account presumes that scientific knowledge operates by positing imaginative theories that are subsequently tested. The process of testing is by verification or falsification and, when these two types of test are compared, falsification is frequently the better approach. Verification stumbles on the difficulty of addressing every single instance covered by a theory within its purview. We may devise a theory about electrons, but can we verify this theory for every single electron in existence? Probably not. Consequently it is better to offer a theory that stands as provisionally true until it is falsified.

Just as a scientific theory explains a wide variety of phenomena, so religious belief provides an explanation for huge numbers of events. The two processes are analogous. Each involves an imaginative leap followed by a testing phase. Yet there are differences between science and religion in relation to the testability of their concepts and the extent to which they rely on observations (Smart, 1966, p. 52). For science, functioning as it does in a material world, confines its conceptions to this world; it cannot test beings like God who are by definition and hypothesis beyond this world. ‘All that is here being affirmed is that the successes of science in no way afford a strong ground for refusing to see another dimension of existence—the transcendent dimension’ (Smart, 1966, p. 53).

Before leaving Smart, one further comment must be made. Ninian Smart’s writings are much more extensive than those of the other contributors. Smart’s work developed after the 1960s into a formulation of religion that divided its aspects into six or seven separate dimensions, only three of which were specifically concerned with truth and therefore with philosophy. Smart’s final position was probably given in the late 1990s (Smart, 1996) in a paper read at a seminar at the North of England Institute for Christian Education in Durham, England, where he argued that ‘no world-view or revelation is susceptible of proof’ and that worldviews assert incompatible theses about the transcendent and ethics. Given the uncertainty caused by agnosticism over truth claims ‘the right posture is soft non-relativism’ (p. 10). Such a position, he argues, would allow the different religions to be seen as having the ability to complement one another. It is a position reached in view of globalisation that, nevertheless, accepts the *right* of each religion to make its own (unverifiable) truth claims.

Elmer Thiessen's Contribution

In a lengthy and thorough book, *Teaching for Commitment*, Thiessen (1993) analyses indoctrination and addresses the accusations that it brings against Christian nurture and, by implication, religious education. For, while the definition of indoctrination may be related to the teaching of doctrines, there are three other criteria by which it may be defined. Indoctrination may be defined by teaching methods, by its consequences or by the intentions of teachers.

Indoctrination may be seen to take place wherever religious doctrines are taught: this is the content criterion. He shows that surprisingly little attention has been focused on the concept of 'doctrines' (Thiessen, 1993, p. 61). Are they uncertain beliefs, false beliefs, beliefs with insufficient or no evidence, beliefs with ambiguous evidence, unfalsifiable beliefs, beliefs held obstinately or beliefs lacking in public agreement? Are they inevitably embedded in systems, always important, central to the heart of an individual, always zealously promoted and necessarily backed by a group or institution (Thiessen, 1993, pp. 61–67)? Examining each of these in turn, Thiessen is able to show that the characteristics contradict each other or are much too vague to be properly useful in a definition. Thus, if doctrines cannot be verified or falsified, then it cannot also be maintained that doctrines involve false beliefs. If religious beliefs are a paradigm case of doctrines, how can one account for the similarity between religious and scientific beliefs, since science contains beliefs that are based on ambiguous evidence that is held passionately and backed by institutions? Indeed, it is the ambiguous evidence for scientific theories that makes the testing of these theories necessary. Moreover, the positivist verification principle was consistently revised to keep metaphysics, aesthetics and theology out and to allow science in. In other words, the goalposts were moved to allow science always to win the verification match.

So far as the method criterion of indoctrination is concerned, non-evidential teaching, the misuse of evidence, perversion of teacher-pupil relationships and the suppression of a critical spirit are all said to be capable of identifying the wrong kind of teaching. But Thiessen shows that it is more or less impossible to provide any teaching, particularly for young children, without methods that could be classified as indoctrinatory on these terms. Wherever there is an authoritative relationship, there is likely to be the traffic of information that would fit into this definition of indoctrination. Even the initiation of pupils into 'public traditions' is indoctrinatory since pupils are expected to accept these traditions as unquestionably true. These are the traditions of society and induction into them which, according to R.S. Peters (1973), is what education is, and which has an indoctrinatory element. Peters admits that his concept of education generates paradoxes of this kind. So, 'if public traditions are the conditions of rationality, then inculcating these conditions cannot itself be rational because there are no criterion of rationality apart from those public traditions' (Thiessen, 1993, p. 96).

It would take too long to work through the intentions and consequences criteria but Thiessen has little difficulty in demonstrating their uselessness. Intentions are

notoriously difficult to identify because they require self-knowledge (how do we know someone else possesses it?) and may be mixed with a variety of short- and long-term goals. Whereas the consequences criterion can be undermined by our inability to identify precisely when the consequences of the wrong kind of teaching have occurred (how long do we wait to observe the effect?). Moreover and confusingly, 'it is difficult to establish the relationship between the closed mind and its cause. A closed mind can be caused by other ways than indoctrination' (Theissen, 1993, p. 150).

In the context of a defence of Christian nurture against the damning charge of indoctrination, the purport of this argument is to show two other things. Firstly, arising out of a consideration of the rational methods used in non-indoctrinatory teaching, it is possible to discern a shift occurring within the notion of rationality itself. Instead of presuming that rationality is always objective and complicit with a Cartesian model of the mind, of observer and uncontaminated observation, a new model of normal rationality is coming into being that accepts a constructivist view of knowledge, an organic view of mind and a recognition that rationality must be expressed by human beings shaped by personal context and social traditions. This reconceptualisation of rationality fits a post-modern zeitgeist and dissolves many of the positivistic objections to religious teaching that function to prosecute the charges of indoctrination.

Secondly, an attempt to locate indoctrination within the compass of 'total institutions' like prisons or Christian schools has to be made carefully since ordinary maintained schools share many of the characteristics of Christian schools by which total institutions are sociologically defined. If 'totality' is a matter of degree rather than an absolute quality, there is a need for discussion about the level of control acceptable within liberal democratic institutions.

The Shared Praxis Approach of Thomas Groome

Groome (1980; see also Groome and Horell, 2003) is concerned to construct an approach to religious education making use of epistemology that prioritises praxis. He works within the Christian tradition while taking care that his definition of praxis harks back to Aristotle and takes in subsequent philosophical developments from Hegel to Habermas. In this rich conceptualisation, praxis includes a critical and rational element and is not simply confined to reflection working directly in conjunction with activity. So for Groome praxis is the key component within a pedagogical process, and it is *shared* because it is shared between teachers and pupils and because it is directed by a common vision of the kingdom of God. In the preface to his book he explains how his attempt to teach by lecturing, by exposition of historical or propositional material, failed to engage pupils in a Catholic boys' high school in the USA. So he developed an approach dependent upon dialogue and exploration that gave a role to social and relational experience. This immediately enthused pupils and was, for its time, innovative. This process of praxis provides a particular sort of epistemology. It is an epistemology that accepts the full range of

experience but then draws out meaning and knowledge through critical reflection. Consequently there is no formal process by which truth-claims are tested. Instead, knowing is much closer to loving because it is akin to personal knowledge. Indeed, where pupils are inducted into tradition they are often also introduced to a religious community, and this necessitates coming to know people who are representatives of the community (e.g., pp. 146, 188).

It is the dialogue between pupils and teacher or among the pupils themselves that prevents this teaching process from being indoctrinatory. Where Groome's approach is weak, however, is in its drawing of a parameter within a particular religious tradition. There is no attempt to stand outside tradition or to compare one tradition with another or to consider objections to the tradition itself in its formative phase. Such objections *might* arise within the process of dialogue but, particularly with younger pupils, there is no reason why they should. Thus, if the tradition contains reports of miracles, there is no obvious way in which these might be properly scrutinised; their mere presence within the tradition confirms their historicity. Nor is there an obvious way of solving old problems with fresh thinking. For instance, if the grounds for opposing contraception developed by Aquinas are now outdated (because they are based on superseded scientific knowledge), can shared praxis criticise the tradition into which pupils are being inducted? In short, Groome's approach does not address the problems addressed by Smart. Rather it may be argued that Groome's approach could be preliminary to that described by Smart. We could propose a shared praxis approach for younger pupils that allowed them to be inducted into a religious tradition within the primary phase of education and that, beyond this in the secondary phase, a more Smartian analysis was applied.

If we try to relate Groome's approach outside a religious tradition or across several traditions, the shared praxis is much more difficult, if not impossible, to apply. This is because without reference to the kingdom of God there would be no common basis for the discussion into which teachers and pupils plunge themselves. The discussion would become free-ranging and without any obvious limitations, focus or direction.

The Humanist Contribution

The humanist position on religious education is less well-developed and less sophisticated than that which has been developed by dialogue with theology or educational theory. In the section that follows, the humanist contribution to debate on religious education is outlined in general terms and by reference to key publications in England and Wales. While there is an implicit philosophical dimension to these contributions, many of them are concerned with the law determining the treatment of religion within the educational system, and they take on a campaigning or polemical character. Although the discussion below is drawn from the situation in Britain, its relevance goes much wider.

The teaching of religion in schools within Britain after 1944 was for about 20 years almost exclusively confined to Christianity and, in the 1950s, religious

education could be said to have been confessional in its aims and intentions, although those who deplore confessionalism make too much of the official confessionalist stance to be found in some public documents (cf. Copley, 1997, pp. 101f). While there was undoubtedly confessionalism within religious education and some examination syllabuses were explicit in advancing the importance of apprehension by pupils of the life of Christ, there were other agencies—for instance the teaching unions—that were less happy to support anything evangelistic or dogmatic. And, truth to tell, the schools were sensitive to criticisms and, so far as one can gain an impression of classroom ethos 50 years ago, careful not to offend the consciences of unbelievers. Within the church schools the situation may have been different but in these institutions teachers could presume that parents wished their children to hear a Christian message.

In 1967 the Plowden report, *Children and their Primary Schools*, was published. It was a landmark document within the post-war period. It included many distinguished contributors, among them the philosopher A. J. Ayer (1968), who, together with five other participants, appended a 'note of reservation on religious education'. Ayer was a prominent humanist, if not atheist, and his note provides an insight into the thinking of humanists at this time.

They object to the teaching of religion in primary schools because they think pupils will inevitably need to study theology, a subject which is too recondite and too controversial to be included within the primary curriculum. Nevertheless, they say pupils should be given arguments for and against the content Christian beliefs and, for cultural reasons, they may be told Bible stories. Although morality is often seen as one of the main functions of religious education, and despite the fact that 'the moral example which the story of Christ' offers should not 'be discounted', it is from the atmosphere of the school rather than from homiletics that they think morality is likely to be derived.

In the 1970s and beyond, the British Humanist Association (BHA) and the National Secular Society comprised the two main associations to press the secular case, and they were able to do so without drawing upon discredited Marxist ideology. Humanism was largely apolitical and mainly appealed to intellectuals; it had little popular or mass support.

In the autumn of 1975 the BHA published a booklet *Objective, Fair and Balanced* that addressed the educational situation in England and Wales. The association pressed for the repealing of the sections of the 1944 Education Act requiring school worship, and wanted a new section that would allow religious education to include non-religious outlooks. It argued that

any education given at any county school to any pupil in attendance at the school with respect to religious or non-religious outlooks or systems of belief shall be objective and (taken overall) fair and balanced over the range of such outlooks and systems of belief (BHA, 1975, p. 47).

The association wanted RE to be concerned with beliefs (rather than practices), so that by 'objectivity' it meant that the teachers could teach about beliefs without

in any way encouraging pupils to embrace these beliefs personally; by 'fairness' that this teaching should be done in an impartial manner and without 'selection and half-truths'; and by 'balance' that the teaching of beliefs should be related to the whole of educational activity related to 'fundamental questions' (BHA, 1975, p. 25).

In an editorial in *Learning for Living* Hull (1976, pp. 82–84) discussed the booklet. He noted that the statement about non-religious beliefs was careful not to mention communism, presumably because of the widespread antipathy that this would have aroused. He also pointed out that it would be difficult to avoid other undesirable belief systems like Fascism as an object to study. He might have added that the notion that religion should be taught fairly is extremely difficult, if not meaningless, to apply since it presumes that there is some pedagogical mid-point within the presentation of religious or non-religious beliefs. Stray to the left of the mid-point and teaching becomes unfair in one direction (too critical), stray to the right and it becomes unfair in another (too credulous).

Again, Hull might have pointed out that the notion of objectivity as a teaching stance is set in complete opposition to the empathy that the phenomenological approach advocated. The humanist desiderata presume that teachers can offer religious beliefs to pupils within a vacuum and without critical discussion or emotional engagement. Beliefs may be presented like philosophical propositions or groundless superstitions. This cold and dispassionate classroom presentation does not help pupils to see how these beliefs are historically and culturally important or why people might be prepared to die for them.

The editorial elicited two replies. Harry Stopes-Rowe (1976) defined 'life stances' and was able to show that capitalism or even Facism would not properly fall within the concept. He argued that a life stance is 'whatever the individual finds to be involved in his response to ultimacy' and, in this way, found a way of including religion and humanism under one heading. John White's reply in 1976 attempted to take Hull to task. Among his comments is a clarification of the question of balance. Here he contends that the balance ought to be between religious and naturalistic stances so that there is no distortion in the formation of a child's values, beliefs and attitudes towards one or the other. White considers that the evidence for religious and nonreligious positions is such that all religions can be put into the scale against naturalistic stances. This, of course, begs a whole series of questions about the onus of proof between various belief systems. White appears to believe that it is 'fair' if all the religions of the world are balanced against one composite naturalistic view: in other words, if teaching about non-religious belief systems comprised 50% of classroom time.

So far as the danger of teaching about Fascism or other pernicious humanistic belief systems is concerned, he makes the point that Christianity has produced offshoots like 'Spiritualism, Exorcism and Fundamentalism and other charismatic sects' which, in his opinion, leave it in no position to throw stones at humanism. Such a point, however, ignores the huge gulf that separates the political oppressiveness of Fascism and the relatively innocuous political activism of most derivations of Christianity. We may say the British Humanist Association, wittingly

or unwittingly, was attempting by its contribution to redefine the terms of debate in a way that was advantageous to itself. Behind the language of fairness and balance may be seen a political agenda.

This political preoccupation was evident in the BHA's publications on church schools and religious education in 2001 and 2002. The 2002 publication offers a diagnosis of the problems that it sees are caused by religion within the state sector of education and then offers its solutions to these problems. It argues that, because British society has changed enormously since 1944, the current legal arrangements that allow church schools to co-exist within one dual system alongside common (or state) schools is due for overhaul. Using statistics suggesting that the public is unwilling to see the number of church or faith-based schools extended, it argues that all religious schools should be abolished, or phased out as the report puts it (2002, p. 16). The statistics here are open to manipulation. It appears that the public likes Anglican schools, as is shown by their oversubscription, but does not favour Islamic schools to which it is unlikely that non-Muslims would be attracted. Anglican schools, by contrast, attract pupils of all beliefs and none (Lankshear, 2003). In detail, and by reference to Human Rights legislation viewed from a particular perspective, that of protecting the right of parents to bring their children up in a religious tradition, it argues that church schools are *discriminatory* in their admissions policies, in their notion of collective worship, in their inflexibility over dress codes and, in some cases, holidays, and because such schools are likely to lead to fragmentation within British society, the time has come to abolish all of them whether they are funded by public money or not. Likewise, collective worship in common (or state) schools, despite the conscience clause that allows parents to withdraw their pupils from this activity, should also be abolished because of divisiveness. Collective worship should be replaced by 'inclusive' non-religious assemblies (2002, p. 36). Religious education, however, would be allowed to continue and non-religious life stances should be included within the RE syllabuses. Pupils or parents who wish for optional faith-based religious instruction should be permitted to receive this on school premises after normal school hours (2002, p. 3).

Religious education would 'give all children an understanding of the range of beliefs found in multi-cultural society and the values shared by most religions and ethical worldviews' (BHA, 2002, p. 11). The subject would aim to be 'genuinely inclusive and impartial' and this would prevent the need for any exercise of the conscience clause allowing withdrawal. Citizenship education would help to encourage respect for different national, religious and ethnic identities, and this in turn would encourage greater openness in RE. A larger number than the six principal world religions would need to be covered and, in order to avoid superficiality, the BHA would like to see 'a broader study of belief systems' and 'concentration in depth on core values' (BHA, 2002, p. 39), omission of much incidental detail that currently clutters up syllabuses (though what this is the BHA does not say), less reliance on faith communities when drawing up syllabuses and more and better teachers.

Space does not permit a detailed comment on every one of the BHA's proposals but it is important to note that this document, despite its obliging tone, is

arguing a case for a particular stance. For instance, although the document quotes accurate figures relating to declining church attendance—about 7.4% of the British population on a normal Sunday (BHA, 2002, p. 25)—it attempts to inflate its own importance by suggesting that it speaks for about 10% of the British population (BHA, 2002, p. 19) while omitting to mention the 2001 census which shows that over 70% of the population classify themselves as Christian. By comparison with church attendance the BHA's membership is miniscule (House of Commons, Education, Science and Arts Committee, 1981). The British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society claimed about 3,000 members each. But there was overlapping membership so the total number was lower than 6,000, and this at a time when church membership amounted to many millions.

More damaging and more pedagogically relevant, despite its references to 'life stances' and 'core values', the BHA thinks of religions as belief systems without any apparent understanding of the complexity of these systems, their aesthetic implications, the sense of community engendered by religion, the emotional and ritual aspect of religion and the extensive moral corollaries that flow out of most religious traditions. By conceptualising religions as systems of belief, religions are shorn of their vital characteristics, decontextualised and reduced to skeletons. Thus the BHA's very conception of religion implies a reductionist strategy that is designed to place religion in all its diversity onto a one-size-fits-all grid; and the only 'religion' that fits the grid perfectly is humanism.

Andrew Wright's Contribution

The most complex and philosophically well-rounded book dealing with religious education comes from Andrew Wright (2004). The sweep of his survey considers the roots of postmodernism, the impact of this on theology and consequences for pedagogy. He then draws out the implications of his conclusions for religious education in both common schools and church schools. Wright addresses a situation that is more complex than that facing Ninian Smart in the 1960s. Modernity, arising out of the Cartesian dualism of subject and object that generated the Enlightenment meta-narrative of unstoppable political and social improvement, has been dissolved by the discourses of liberalism and romanticism. Romanticism prioritises personal and experiential knowledge and authenticates it by reference to emotion or self-expression. Liberalism exists in a hard and a soft form, and it is the hard form that eventuates in a covert metanarrative that relativises all claims to fixed or absolute truth. Indeed, truth claims founder on the presumption that there is no overarching reality, metaphysical or rational, with which we may engage, since postmodernism only leaves us with the discarded fragments of images and concepts belonging to exploded metanarratives. From this wreckage (according to Baudrillard, 1994) a form of idealism made by the resources of language and technology comes into being to create a dazzling hyper-reality that is richer than our ordinary perceptions of the world while, at the same time, denying the distinction between truth and fiction.

Wright outlines the possibilities inherent within 'critical realism' which neither succumbs to the weaknesses of modernity nor to the criticisms of postmodernity. It occupies a middle ground that accepts we can only indwell the world rooted in particular time and space while, at the same time, accepting the validity and irreducibility of different academic disciplines. Consequently, we can affirm the reality of our knowledge of the world while recognising its provisionality. We can reject the nihilism implicit within anti-realism but still ensure that our 'horizons of meaning remain flexible' (p. 65).

Theology must walk into this *mêlée* of philosophical ideas. Wright traces the development of Western theology from Augustine through Ockham, Calvin and the deists to show how the impact of romanticism interacted with religious experience to issue in a fundamental shift in our understanding of religious language. While classical theology operated under a cognitive-propositional understanding that could carry notions of truth and error, romanticism gave birth to experiential-expressive religious language that became, in the hands of John Hick (1977) and by amalgamation with liberalism, a theology that identifies the ultimate and transcendent in every world religion as one and the same reality. Yet Hick's synthesis fails to address the problem of religious pluralism. Something better is required, something that recognises difference, and the authenticity of the Other. Two potential candidates, the radical theology of Don Cuppitt and the negative theology of Jacques Derrida, are deficient for other reasons: by their subservience to postmodern philosophy they rule out the possibility of God's self-revelation (p. 108).

Other theologies are examined, particularly that of post-Holocaust Judaism but, in the end, Wright argues that Trinitarian theology is capable of making realistic statements about God that run against the grain of postmodern thought without descending into totalitarianism. This is because, from an epistemological point of view, God can never be *fully* understood, with the result that Christian truth claims remain at the level of contingent rationality, and, substantively, because the God being revealed is the God of love.

Pedagogy must operate within the same philosophical *mêlée* as faces theology. Here the project of contemporary education, arising as it does through the development of a tension between classical education and Rousseau's subsequent romantic revision as amplified by liberalism, issues in progressive education whose goal is personal development. Such an educational programme inspires an anti-realist pedagogy that dispenses with any conception of a curriculum that advances knowledge. However, such a pedagogy is neither justifiable nor desirable because it simply reproduces the 'repressive tendencies of modern educational theory in a post-modern guise' (p. 165). What is needed is a critical pedagogy to function within a framework of critical realism and, within religious education, what is needed is an extension of this pedagogy that, in addition, attends to the politics of difference while making use of four key virtues that may function as values. These virtues are those of honesty about our entanglement with language; receptivity to horizons of difference; wisdom understood as the notion of rationality developed by critical realists and, finally, truthfulness that admits to religious incompatibilities

and is suspicious of the dogmas of anti-realism and various types of religious fundamentalism. This allows religious education to be offered to children within an educational context that is self-critical about its own assumptions and confessions and yet big enough to make room for the possibility of transcendent reality.

Political Contexts

At this point we turn to the political arena. This is because philosophical considerations concerning the activity of religious education or, indeed, about church schools, are highly dependent upon the political context in which that discussion finds concrete expression. Although philosophical discussions in the past have been located in a purely theoretical space, this space was created by an implicit enlightenment tradition which very early on applied itself to political questions (Locke, 1993/1680).

The discussion here presumes that religious education and church school education take place within democratic societies. In other words, there is an assumption that as wide a range of interests and views as possible ought to participate within the formation of policy so as to secure maximum consensus. Behind the discussion about beliefs and values is the assumption that they will contribute to the cohesion of democratic society. This is why the accusation of divisiveness or discrimination, when it is levelled against religion, is so powerful.

The presumption of this chapter, then, is that philosophical approaches to religious education are being implemented within democratic societies that use public funding to support education. Such societies do not wish to fund the forces of anarchy or to sow the seeds of fragmentation. Whatever rights of religious expression might inform public policy there are, both in law and in philosophical expositions of liberalism, recognitions that physical restraint, even violence, may be used to limit freedom where that freedom threatens the freedom of others (Mill 1961/1859). Consequently all forms of education are likely to be expected to observe analogous restraints on intellectual and spiritual liberty.

Naturally the political structures that have been erected over many years vary from country to country and, as Judge (2001; 2002) has pointed out, the position of religion within educational systems varies between France, United States and Britain even though they are all democratic countries belonging to the Western tradition. The theorisation of Smart was designed to be applicable within Britain, where church schools are funded with public money and where they share with common (or state) schools similar provisions for religious education and collective worship. Groome, by contrast, addressed the position within the United States, where religious education might occur in the context of church attendance or private Catholic schools. Thiessen, coming from Canada where the separation of church and state has ambiguous historical rootage (Miller, 1993, p. 333), was nevertheless concerned to address issues advanced by those who wish to exclude religion from education and to debar religious schools from public funding. Wright applies his analysis to the broadly Western world that is home to liberal common schools

carrying forward the traditions of the enlightenment and to long-established church schools because, in both, the same intellectual forces are at work and the same virtues may function.

In all these societies, at least after the 1960s, political structures have been infused with a philosophy of pluralism. Such a philosophy accepts the equal validity of a variety of religious and cultural manifestations and articulates this in terms of general rights so that every minority—religious, ethnic or sexual—can utilise public space with equal confidence. Pluralism becomes a wider force shaping the way in which social relationships are transacted by contributing political principles and motives to the conduct of civil life, the framing of legislation and the role of schooling.

Along with pluralism as a cultural climate is the educational concept of multiculturalism that, in its simplest form, attempts to nurture the cultural identity of numerous individuals, often by curricular support, within an educational system. Such identity may be shown by dress, marriage or burial ceremonies, music, food preferences and other forms of non-political activity. The dilemma of multiculturalism identified by Bullivant (1981) is that, while minorities may wish to see their cultural identity fostered within a public education system, it may be to their advantage to gain expertise in the language and customs of the dominant (ethnic) elite to compete for higher salaries and prestigious jobs. There is therefore a paradox at the heart of multicultural education, since preserving minority cultures may also condemn their least academic adherents to poverty and low status.

Knowledge Transformation

To the political context in which philosophical considerations about religion occur must be added those two great agencies within contemporary societies: universities and the mass media. The universities have from their earliest times been places where training for the professions has been carried out alongside research, even if research in the Middle Ages amounted to the study of classical texts, and attempts to drive the frontiers of knowledge forward were made through dialectical debate (Bowen, 1975). But the point is that universities have continued to function both as the repositories of historical knowledge, often by the protection of precious manuscripts, and as the factories and laboratories of new knowledge (Silver, 2003).

The advent of the 20th century mass higher education has increased the leverage of universities in relation to entire social systems, and this leverage has been accentuated by the relationship that universities have developed, on the one hand, with the mass media and, on the other, with governments who, increasingly in the modern era, have become the paymasters of university campuses (Roberts, 2002). The linkage between universities and governments tends to increase in times of war (or terrorism) when universities have turned their research facilities toward solving military problems.

The ability of universities to generate and classify knowledge is seen in the work of scientists and technicians and in the influence of philosophers who, during

the 20th century, were almost all employed, at some stages of their careers, in the university sector. Philosophy began to see itself as being able to provide a comprehensive vision of the human condition (for instance, in the evolutionary sociology of Herbert Spencer or the existentialism of Sartre and Camus) or, failing such a grandiose scheme, as having the capacity to formulate a verification principle with the penetrative power to strip away widely-held delusions.

The mass media constitute a vast sprawl of print-based, digitised, televisual, imagistic and voice-based output that have altered the generality of perception within modern societies. Whereas 200 years ago there might be uniformity within the village and discussion across a narrow range of possibilities, the 21st century has begun to grow accustomed to a globalised clash of images and perspectives pressing every possible opinion with vibrant urgency. Such a plethora of views has surely contributed to the phenomenon of late modernity or postmodernism whereby meta-narratives have been first broken and then rejected. Lacking criteria by which to make judgements about the pronouncements of politicians and philosophers, every opinion is deemed to be of almost equal value and religion is, except within the school system, privatised and placed within a largely interior world where it can neither be challenged nor analysed.

In the light of these huge changes, changes that are taking place against an exponential growth in the world's population, it is possible to discern several megatrends. Darwinian evolutionism is widely accepted in the West and is thought to be confirmed by researches into DNA, with result that a materialistic view of the world appears to be supported by harder evidence than that provided by fossil sequences or the statistical manipulation of small gene pools (Gribben, 2002), as in the case of Gregor Mendel's experiments. Such a value system sits alongside a passion for green issues, biodiversity and global warming so that, despite genuflections towards post-modern relativism in the media and in university circles, there is an underlying, but not yet dominant, perception about the undeniable dangers inherent within the human condition, dangers that are only exacerbated by political conflicts fought through terrorist organisations.

Towards a Conclusion

It is now time to assess the approaches of Smart, Thiessen, Groome, the BHA and Wright to the solution of philosophical problems within religious education, situated as they are within the politics of democratic states whose universities and mass media fuel postmodernity that rides on top of a Darwinian worldview informed by fears of global catastrophe caused by terrorism and climate change.

Each contribution can be assessed by reference to three separate areas. First, in relation to the conflicting truth claim between religions or between religions and science. Second, by reference to the political implications of its philosophical analysis. Third, by reference to the pedagogy that it creates or assumes (cf. Kay, 2002).

First, then, Smart produces the most subtle and simple analysis of the clash between religion and science by offering an inductive hermeneutic of foundational texts while drawing attention to the parallel between religion and science: their similar logical shape may allow them to claim equal epistemological status. There is a well-worked recognition of the intellectual traditions of science and religion but little that rings true in relation to the psychological capacities of pupils. Groome's work is more open and allows shared praxis to create an implicit relativism, since different conclusions will be drawn by different groups of pupils and teachers in different schools. Yet this approach has the advantage of allowing conflict into the open and encouraging it to be resolved at the micro-level within particular working groups of human beings. The humanist approach is concerned to delineate difference rather than to explain it or resolve it. It appears to envisage a kind of checklist of beliefs for each life stance, with reference to overlapping ethical values when this is possible. Wright points out the weaknesses of scientific positivism since this elevates scientific methods to an imperious position where they may determine the truth claims of other areas of human existence. Wright's willingness to recognise difference and to leave truth claims unresolved in the interests of educational honesty is a welcome proposal.

Second, Smart operated in an era when universities were expected to be intellectual authorities and, consequently, his reform programme for religious education is partially a top-down affair that resolves problems between religions within the university setting and then seeks to apply these further down the educational system at school level. Politically, the most sophisticated of these approaches is found among the humanists whose attempt to redraw debate around their own ideal notion of fairness allows them to include their preferred religious position within the curriculum while seeking to close down church schools that have, in some cases, hundreds of years of service to their communities. Consequently, the humanist position looks sectarian and negative. But Wright is also politically sophisticated in his recognition of the totalising impact of post-modern discourse. His willingness to reinstate truth and honesty as educational virtues has political implications for our conceptions of multiculturalism and pluralism, even within educational settings and variant democratic polities.

Third, pedagogy is implied or worked out within all of these philosophical approaches, although the most sensitive in relation to the nature of religion itself is that of Smart, and the most simple, but probably effective, in relation to the classroom is probably that of Groome. Wright has integrated his pedagogical approach into an overall philosophical analysis and this makes it attractive. The implied pedagogy of the humanist position appears to be rudimentary and to have little affinity either with the nature of religion, the philosophical location of religion within the current era or the psychological capacities of children.

Although the philosophical and political context of educational debate is perennially important, the imperatives of ecology and the instabilities perpetrated by stateless terrorism are of such ultimate importance as to find a place more properly within religion. In other words, it is religion that addresses global problems and it is

religion that may help to solve or to perpetuate these problems (Kung, 1994). Good religious education can help to foster the conditions whereby religious adherents within democratic states put their energies towards human flourishing. Or, to put this another way, it is the indoctrinatory and irresponsible transmission of oversimplified religious solutions that threaten our existence. The restoration of the Islamic Caliphate across the entire Middle East, the unthinking Christian support of right-wing American foreign policy or the abolition of religious charities in a burst of humanist zeal are all, for different reasons, highly undesirable. Yet religious education within the common schools of democracies can make such outcomes less probable while, at the same time, protecting and introducing the beliefs, practices, values, hopes and visions of major religions to successive generations of children.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN EUROPE: COMPARATIVE APPROACH, INSTITUTIONS, THEORIES, RESEARCH

Karl Ernst Nipkow

Protestant Faculty of Theology, University of Tübingen

Introduction

In this chapter, Karl Ernst Nipkow provides a wide-ranging discussion, which identifies and analyses issues that surround the theory and practice of religious education across Europe. He discusses the tensions between the individual and community aspects of religions and how these interplay in societies. Related interplays are between the private and the public interests of religion, between developmental and initiating processes, between the individual search and applying religion to social issues. The complexities of religious education practice within these competing yet interrelated pressures are discussed within the framework of contemporary European education, and against the background of Protestant history.

Comparative Religious Education Theory and Semantics

Lacking Comparative Research

Since 1978 the *International Seminar on Religious Education and Values* (ISREV), convened by John M. Hull, Birmingham, UK, has been the main instrument for general scholarly exchange about theory and semantics in religious education. The Seminar has been gradually transformed from a mainly Anglo-Saxon and Western European enterprise to a more global one, which now includes scholars from other continents. Nevertheless it is still lacking full global representation, since Eastern Europe (Russia) and the French and Spanish speaking world (France, Southern Europe, Latin America) are absent with only few exceptions. International societies such as ISREV are the soil for comparative knowledge and cross-cultural research. The *International Academy of Practical Theology* (IAPT, since 1991)

has added new resources to a fruitful network of communication. (For European associations contributing to exchange see the European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education (EFTRE) (www.EFTR.org), the Inter-European Commission for Church and School (ICCS) (www.iccsweb.org) and the Coordinating Group for Religious Education (CoGREE) (www.cogree.com.) However, international comparative research in religious education that deserves this name exists only in its beginnings (Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003a). Nation-specific portrayals of RE in Europe were first published in the seventies and eighties by the Comenius Institute (Muenster, Germany) (www.comenius.de). Up-dated descriptions are to be found in Mette/Rickers, 2001. The exchange of practical experiences and research is also promoted by journals, mainly the Journal of Empirical Theology (JET, since 1988) with the focus on empirical studies, and by Panorama International Journal of Comparative Religious Education and Values (since 1989), the latter with the ISREV conferences as background.

Asymmetry in the Command of Languages and Semantic Fluctuation of Key Constructs

Another obstacle is asymmetry in the command of the main international languages, and their usage at international conferences. A major factor which plays a role in mutual understanding and cooperation is semantic pluralism, and fluctuation with regard to key terms. The developments in the Western style of dealing with religious education have, to a great extent, dismissed the theological language game, and replaced it with terms which are supposed to build necessary bridges between the believers of all world religions, and to appeal in particular to the highly individualistic ways of a religious and non-religious search for meaning in secularised societies. The new key construct is the term spirituality. Critical voices speak of the age of the spiritual shopping centre, and draw the conclusion that religious education must prepare people to enter into this shopping centre in order to learn how to distinguish between different qualities in spiritual resources. Even the broad term 'religion' is considered as theoretically too narrow.

Where are the criteria for a rigorous quality check of all of this? To what extent are we justified in clarifying the theological identity of each religion, and introducing children into them? The way of religious education in a plural world needs both; that is, recognisable religious traditions and convictions, and a true dialogue between the different cultures and faiths (Nipkow, 1998) in which 'the Western lamp is not the only one we have' (Panikkar, 1987, p. 123). 'Pluralism in its ultimate sense is not the tolerance of a diversity of systems under a larger umbrella; it does not allow for any superstructure' (Panikkar, p. 125). An 'umbrella' can be constructed on the objective or the subjective level. On the objective side the attempt has been made to design a rational Kantian construction of 'the Real an sich', either incorporated in 'divine personae' or envisaged in 'impersonae of the Real' (Hick, 1989, p. 246). On the subjective level 'spirituality' is the most general term for indicating the self-transcending of the individual. Originally the word *spirituality* belonged to Catholic monastic theology (*spiritualité*). It is derived

from the Latin word *spiritus* which meant the Holy Spirit in the Christian creed. Today the term *spirituality* serves to assume many meanings in relation to each individual's preferences or the lifestyles of groups and movements. This extension opens the door to fluctuation, disparity and often vagueness of language in religious education discourse.

Religious Education (RE) and Church Schools as Selected Topics Against the Background of the Public Relevance of Religion

Paradigms of Structural Educational Patterns

Education takes place in different forms of learning. The most effective seems to be informal learning in the life of a group, a community or a society as a whole. The young generation adopts the norms, convictions and attitudes which are held by the majority, and are continually socially reinforced, mostly on an unconscious level. In the realm of religion, the well-known pattern of letting children emotionally and ritually participate in religious family life, liturgy and church festivals is based upon the knowledge that 'life-forms' with their 'language-games' (Wittgenstein, 1958) exert a strong informal or functional socialising influence on children as well as on persons in general (paradigm of *unintentional functional* education). A main channel is religious learning by face-to-face contacts and via imitation. In modern societies, the former religious ecology of the family is more or less broken. Religious educators like John Westerhoff (Westerhoff, 1976) attempt to re-establish the educational function of religious communities. 'He advocates a paradigm shift within congregational education, calling for the elimination of the schooling-instructional paradigm and its replacement by a religious socialisation and faith enculturation paradigm' (Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003a, p. 175). Only an identity conscious, tradition bearing religious community can help children to know who they are.

Schooling is the classical form of the organisation of intentional education as direct formal learning. It includes all ways of intentional educational procedures, mainly instructional procedures (paradigm of *intentional-direct* education). A third form combines the advantages of both types by deliberately establishing an artificial, functional educative environment or ecology (paradigm of *intentional-functional* education). In modern religious education practice, this direct-indirect modelling can be observed everywhere, e.g., in the display of religious items from various religions for learning by discovery (Hull, 1996; Grimmer, 2000) or by developing a specific culture in the classroom and in the school as a whole. Many educational methods of today, in this sense, go back to the Reform pedagogy of the first decades of the twentieth century.

Religion Between Privatised Individualistic Spirituality and Public Responsibility

The following analysis focuses on direct formal religious education in two institutions: state schools and denominational schools. The latter try to apply religious

perspectives also in other subjects of the curriculum. The argument of this chapter leaves out all phenomena of informal religious education. It also sets aside religious nurture in family and congregational life. This selection first obeys the historical development in Europe which has been strongly influenced by the theology of Reformation, and secondly, follows systematic arguments.

In the 16th century Martin Luther (1483–1546) and Philipp Melancthon (1497–1560) demanded a separate instruction in Christianity for boys and girls in the curriculum of all schools for about two lessons a week. This innovation became the main starting point of RE in Europe, since the Roman Catholic Church in the Counter-Reformation followed the Protestant initiative with a quite similar strategy of transmitting a Catechism with the emphasis on the youth. On the Protestant side the aim was to inform about the new theological approach to Christian faith in elementary terms, and to enable everyone to explain and justify his or her own faith in a clear, reflected way. This individual religious self-reflection with the democratic emphasis on lay-people was to become an important source of the later concept of secular individual self-education (*Selbstbildung*) in the time of Enlightenment and Idealism. Thus, religious education in the Protestant perspective is obliged to promote a self-critical religious understanding. Personal faith defined itself as independent of hierarchical clerical authorities. The new norm was the individual conviction in relationship to the authority of the Word of God in the Bible. In the Swiss Reformation (John Calvin 1509–1564) the new independence of faith was passionately defended against persecuting political authorities. In the past century the great European Calvinist theologian Karl Barth became the prominent head of theological resistance against Adolf Hitler (see the *Barmen Theological Declaration*, 1934).

The second most influential systematic idea shared by all main theological Protestant camps was the new spiritual appreciation of the individual Christian's vocation in the secular professional world, which was interpreted as God's call to responsibility for the common good. It abolished the former hierarchical spiritual ranking in the medieval church, which regarded the monastic status as the truly holy vocation on the path to religious perfection. Now God's twofold government, his spiritual on the right hand and his secular on the left hand, led to a new appreciation of education in both spheres. The acquisition of a good education, of general and professional skills and knowledge, was needed to fulfil God's will as creator with respect to social life. Education in general, not only religious education, became a main instrument in preserving God's humankind in a world of sin, and in the battle against the satanic power of evil. In the 17th century John Amos Comenius (1592–1670) emphasised not only the preservation, but—in the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ—also the striving for universal progress with regard to all human affairs. It is these two lines of theological ideas, the self-reflective Christian autonomy of the individual believer and the public co-responsibility of the church for the human quality of the society, which constitute the general perspective of RE in state schools and of church schools in European Protestantism today.

There are liberal and conservative wings in all major religions in Europe and worldwide, although not every religious group sees their situation in this way.

From the very beginning of Christian education in the East the traditions of various churches have differed. The Orthodox Russian church is fixed upon liturgy, and many believers see the monastic life as their spiritual ideal. The idea of public responsibility and the resistance to arrogance and fundamentalism in their own Church (Fedorov, 1998) or the interest in inter-denominational contacts and understanding (Kozyrev, 2001) is only slowly gaining ground, with a small minority, against traditional spiritual, pious self-seclusion. The official mainstream of the Russian Orthodox Church expects every Russian citizen to be an Orthodox Christian, which, in view of the existing majority of atheists as a result of the Communist past, is an illusion (Minney, 2000).

The common denominator in the public European discourse is the view that the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of religious education should not one-sidedly be directed towards the development of a totally privatised, individual spirituality. The political involvement and impact of religions in global, regional and intra-societal conflicts is too obvious. This fact explains why the biblical tradition is reconstructed from the perspective of its contribution to resist violence and promote peace education in global terms (Nipkow, 2003).

The Interests of the European Council in Religious Education

In several declarations the European Council has expressed its interest in religious tolerance between religions, and in the constructive contributions of all religions to the general good. In this policy religious education played a prominent role. In 1993 the *Assembly of the Council of Europe* published its recommendation 1202 on *Religious Tolerance in a Democratic Society*. The earlier declarations pointed to the same basic requirement: recommendation 963 (1983) on *How to Reduce Violence*; recommendation 885 (1987) on the *Jewish Contribution to European Culture*; recommendation 1086 (1988) on the *Situation of the Church and Freedom of Religion in Eastern Europe*; recommendation 1162 (1991) on the *Contribution of the Islamic Culture to European Culture*; and recommendation 1178 (1992) on *Sects and New Religious Movements*.

In each of these declarations the Council expressed the conviction that all great religions in Europe—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—can make a positive contribution to the development of tolerance as a necessary ingredient of human culture. Evidently the Council wanted to elicit the constructive potential of religion. Yet it was clear that European politicians were also deeply concerned about the destructive potential of religion. Throughout history religion has been two-sided, exercising the powers of both reconciliation and conflict, love and hate, respect and disregard of human dignity, both granting and stifling religious freedom.

New Challenges in the Context of Present European Politics

Two recently published volumes on religious education—one compiling the papers of an International Symposium in Istanbul from 28–30 March 2001 (*Din Öğretimi*

Genel Müdürlüğü, 2003), the other a collection of articles with the emphasis on Eastern Europe (Poland, Russia, Ukraine, published in Poland) (Kucha, 2004)—express the efforts of both countries to prove their competence in the socio-political and cultural context of a growing European community. An open question is whether Turkey belongs to Europe and should become a member of the community. The traditional Eurocentrism is heavenly challenged, and so are the European churches in view of the many millions of Muslim European citizens. All religions are asked to spell out their importance and their future functions in common European public affairs in understandable and tolerant terms. Religious education has to fight against prejudices. An individualistic religious or non-religious spirituality is no sufficient aim and meets no public interest. If religions convert to become contributors to a ‘spiritual shopping-centre’ (see the article by Ph. Hughes in this Handbook, section 5, 1), ironically superseded by new age movements at that, they deprive themselves of the chance to convince others by an identifiable public role. This role is strongly defended by J. W. Fowler (Fowler, 1991, pp. 147–197; cf. Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003b).

The arguments given above explain why church-related schools, and RE in state schools, are both regarded as important institutions in the public sphere. In Germany and elsewhere in Europe, Christian RE and church schools understand themselves primarily as an essential part of the public school-system in a civil society, not as an instrument of the churches for any egoistic clerical or dogmatical interests. On the other side the links to a self-critical theology and to the prophetic mandate of the churches give RE and church schools an independence of their own over and against the power and the interests of governments in merely a civil religion (Bellah, 1967). An individualistic concept of ‘spirituality’ will hardly be able to release a critical and publicly relevant consciousness. The trend to the inwardness of individual piety and spirituality has also become a major obstacle to the re-creation of the Christian mission today. Is RE, therefore, to become a form of mission? No, it is education. The next section of this chapter outlines the legal and institutional pre-conditions that are necessary in order to properly discuss the conceptual perspectives.

Legal Framework and Educational Organisation

Separation of State and Religion and the Basic Right of Religious Freedom

In Europe church and state are more or less separated. A liberal pluralistic democracy forbids the one-sided identification of the state with any specific religion. Nevertheless the ways of implementation vary. In the United Kingdom there is a state church (Church of England) as well as in Norway, where changes in the curriculum of the training of ministers have to pass the Norwegian parliament. At the other end of this spectrum, France has a strictly laicist separation of state and religion in state schools without RE in the curriculum, except for the Department of Alsace, because the former institutionalised RE when it belonged to Germany. The origin of this strict separation goes back to the French Revolution of 1789.

In the era of Communist rule in Eastern European countries (Union of Soviet Socialist Countries, Poland, German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Roumania) RE in state schools was abolished. Karl Marx had assumed that all religion would die out. The belief in a divine reality was incompatible with the doctrines of historical and dialectical materialism. While in France there was a sceptical laicist attitude, the Communist pattern of separation was a hostile one. Today the former Communist countries have a democratic constitution and RE is re-instituted everywhere.

In the middle of the spectrum we see the solution in German speaking countries (Federal Republic of Germany, Austria, Switzerland). One can describe this as a cooperative form of separation, i.e., the state is religiously neutral and the right of *negative religious freedom* is to reject religious claims or force by the state. At the same time the constitution provides for opportunities of confessional or denominational RE in state schools, theological faculties at state universities, and the public integration of educational institutions for children (Kindergarten) and adults (Protestant and Catholic Academies) which are financially supported. This *positive religious freedom* in favour of the religions expresses the appreciation of religion by the state. In Switzerland the situation differs between the 26 regional Kantons.

Today the governments in Europe share one new great problem: a growing religious pluralism which transcends the traditional Christian heritage. All religious education solutions have to obey the fundamental basic right of freedom of religion. One difference results from whether the negative or the positive aspect of religious freedom becomes the leading principle. Historically and logically there are only a few competing solutions.

- a. the laicist solution with no RE at all (France);
- b. RE in all schools in a multi-faith approach (England and Wales);
- c. several separated forms of RE combined with mutual exchange and instructional cooperation (Germany);
- d. moral education (ME) as a substitute for religious education in the curriculum or as an alternative option.

Religious Indifference and Atheism and the Political Interest in Moral Education

Europe is a continent which has been shaped by Christianity and the Enlightenment including radical religious scepticism and atheism. In big German towns (Frankfurt, Hamburg, Berlin) the majority of the population does not belong to any church. In East Germany church membership is lowest, consisting of only 20–25% of the population. The largest non-Christian religion is Islam, with about 800,000 Muslim children in the German school system. This situation explains why moral education (ME) also plays a decisive role. The political authorities need ME or Practical Philosophy for those pupils whose parents reject, or who themselves reject, Christian RE, which is possible from the age of 14. Since the state is interested in transmitting moral values and certain religious information, the subject ME includes at least

some religious material. Further reasons in support of ME in the curriculum are the cultural public interest, for religions are part of the national culture, and the vital political interest in values education to ensure the inner coherence of the society.

There has been an interest in a political religion since the time of ancient Rome. In nations with Romance languages (France, Italy, Spain) ME is part of education for citizenship (*éducation civique*, *educazione civica*, *educación cívica*). In Russia and in the Republic of Slovakia, ME is a subject of its own, named *eticeskaja grammatika* or *Etická výchova*, *Ethical Education* (Brüning, 2002, p. 396). In Germany *Ethikunterricht* or *Praktische Philosophie* is also an independent subject in the curriculum.

Muslim pupils either attend ME or the confessional Protestant or Catholic RE which has more or less developed inter-religious and inter-cultural educational dimensions according to the situation. Sometimes Muslim parents explicitly prefer RE instead of ME, because of the fact that belief in God still plays a constitutive role. By the instrument of free options the right of religious freedom is carefully taken into account. At the present time, the year 2005, some regional governments have developed an Islamic RE with support of the Protestant and Catholic churches.

In those countries where a greater number of different religions makes it impossible to organise models c) and d) above, the solutions tend to a multi-faith pattern, as in England and Wales. In Norway the traditional Christian RE, based on the Lutheran state church, has changed its methodology in this sense. In Switzerland the Kanton Zurich is about to introduce a new subject obligatory for all called *Culture and Religion* for the general development cf. Bakker et al. (2006ff.); Heimbrock, 2004; Larsson & Gustavsson, 2006; Schreiner, Pollard & Sagberg, 2006; Zonne 2006.

Religious Schools (Church Schools)

In Europe most religious schools are shaped by the Christian tradition (Francis & Lankshear, 1993; Marggraf, 2004; Schelander, 2004), as illustrated by the following statistics. The Church of England owns 4,818 schools, i.e., 21.74% of all schools in England. In France, Catholic schools dominate. In the Netherlands 60% of all schools have been established by religious societies, and there are 30% Reformed tradition, 30% Catholic, three Jewish schools, three Hindu schools, 37 Islamic primary schools and two Islamic schools at the secondary level. In Germany church-related schools amount to 2,200 schools, the biggest group being Catholic (1,156). In total the proportion of pupils attending church schools in Germany comprises only 5%.

The following factors contribute to the differences noted above. The first factor is the minority or majority status of the religion, and both majority and minority status of a religion cause it to emphasise having its own schools, either because of the powerful tradition of a state church as in England, or because its own schools are the only way to be present in the public educational sphere, as in France. In Germany the Catholic Church tries to realise its interest in having its own schools, in particular in those regions where it is in a minority position, especially in the traditionally Protestant Northern (Hamburg) and Eastern regions with Catholic families of only about 4% of the population.

Another factor is of a fundamentally political nature. Either the state respects the right of the religions to their public self-presentation and self-interpretation, such as in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and elsewhere, or it does not. The Netherlands provide for at least some Islamic schools, since a pluralistic school system belongs to the national tradition. In England and Wales, Islamic schools would possibly undermine the multi-faith approach to religious education, and so its advocates tend to resist Islamic schools. In Germany religious schools are welcomed as the expression of a liberal plural society and of the educational co-responsibility of the religions (Nipkow, Elsenbast & Kast, 2004).

Religious Identity and Inter-religious Understanding

Aims and Effects of Various Forms of RE

Different institutional solutions are linked to differing aims and will produce different effects. A multi-faith approach, as shown in model b), will emphasise the learning of religious togetherness, friendly encounter and the experience of tolerance, which is disturbed by presenting major differences between the religions. The advantages of this approach are obvious, but the disadvantages are neglected. On the one hand there is a richness of several interesting and educational creative approaches by combining the phenomenological (Smart, 1984), experiential (Grimmitt, 1973) interpretive and ethnographic (Jackson, 1997) methodologies. The overall aim is directed to a commonly shared spirituality and to a highly individualised spiritual search. On the other hand, this interest must reduce the role of specific faith differences between the world religions, even though in the eyes of the believers these might be very important. Another side-effect is the caution that is applied to the making of value judgments about particular religions. The multi-faith approach is based on religious studies; specific theologies, i.e., Jewish, Christian and Islamic theology, play a subordinate role.

The strength of the multi-faith approach is the weakness of model c) where RE is given in denominationally separated groups, such as in Germany: Protestant RE, Catholic RE, Moral or Philosophical Education, in some towns Jewish RE, and preliminary attempts with Islamic RE. In Austria Islamic RE has existed since 1912. A major objection to this response to religious pluralism is that separation fosters intolerance in the population. One must not forget that the pupils will be instructed together in all other subjects and that the separating influence of a two-lessons subject on attitudes and behaviour should not be overestimated. In Germany and Austria there is no discussion about this point, since confessional RE has become open-minded and has lost its former confessionalist outlook.

The majority of Protestant religious educators prefer a cooperative model as shown in pattern c). The overall aim is not a missionary one; the pupils are to become familiar with the religion of their option and to learn also to understand other religions and world-views. The aims are realistic. They include basic religious knowledge, awareness of the nature of religious experience and respectful attitudes

towards people with different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The advantages are seen in the following effects:

- separate religious education for each religion allows for a broader and deeper understanding of their own religion: there is more time for each religion so, as far as possible, superficiality is avoided;
- each pupil has the right and the opportunity to become familiar with the religion of his or her cultural heritage and family tradition;
- the numerous children and young people who have never been introduced to any religious tradition, but who voluntarily attend confessional RE (in East German regions up to 60–70%) can learn at least about one specific religion in a deeper way;
- learning about one religion intensively means to become aware of the nature of religion in general, a fact which supports understanding of other religions;
- the instructional phases of inter-confessional and inter-religious cooperation (or cooperation between RE and ME) provide the necessary exchange around topics of common and controversial interest;
- elementary theological clarification is constitutive for each form of RE (Christian, Jewish, Islam);
- consequently information about and discussion of religious truth-claims forms a constitutive part of the approach;
- truth-experiences essentially belong to each religion; controversial discourse is not avoided by suspending judgment;
- tolerance is learnt through understanding religious differences and value-systems.

Church Schools in Europe Between Ghetto and Self-secularisation

In many European countries the churches are educationally involved as partners of the state, not only with regard to RE in state schools, but also by maintaining their own schools. Empirical studies confirm their attractiveness among parents independently of their church membership. In other words, a considerable number of parents who are not bound to church life appreciate church-related schools because of the school-climate, the positive interactions between teachers and students, the higher amount of individual educational counselling, the high participation of parents in shaping the school-culture and because of high standards and achievements in some academic subjects and in social competence. For many parents the religious factors do of course play a role too, but often more as an accompanying side-effect.

Conservative evangelical Christian groups mistrust this concept. They form an active minority, and cultivate their own schools alongside the official educational church policy, pursuing their interest to transmit the 'true' faith and to prepare children to become 'true believers'. These schools strive to serve as a bulwark against the temptations of the time. They complain that the 'normal' church schools do not promote faith. Church authorities concede that the question whether, for instance, Anglican schools 'will produce the Anglicans of the future' must plainly be

answered with 'they have not' (Brown, 1988, p. 166). The broad research on Church schools in Great Britain (Francis and Lankshear, 1993) has delivered realistic results in this respect.

Thus the general situation of Christian schools in Europe is, at least in some countries, that between 'ghetto and self-secularisation' (Marggraf, 2004). In Great Britain a trend to isolation is acknowledged: 'The issue of isolation knocks at the door of all religious state schools—for some it knocks louder than others'. (Brown, 1988, p. 167). On the one hand, church authorities and groups of parents want their own schools to become strong faith alternatives to the majority of secular schools. On the other hand, in particular in Germany, the church-related schools strive to share the aims of modern schooling and at the same time to show their Christian profile.

Learning as Individual Self-organisation and Through Difference

Religious education today has to tackle two main problems: first how to organise learning through difference, and second to acknowledge that all learning is self-organisation (*autopoiesis*). To begin with the second: cognitive psychology, system-theory, constructivistic epistemology, and neurobiology show that the consciousness of an individual cannot be *directly* influenced by educational interventions from outside. All perceptions that are received from the outer world will be adapted in the inner consciousness. Their effect is dependent on the individual transformational processes of each person.

This fact alone, apart from normative objections, forbids the idea of education as *imprinting/shaping/forming*, which perhaps is the oldest thought-pattern about education, evolutionarily taken from handicraft and technology (education as technology). Nor is education adequately conceived of as *developing/growing*, another old pattern taken from the observation of the growth of plants (organological view of education). Learning is *self-formation*, but it is continuously dependent on encounter and interaction with *tradition* from the past, *challenge* in the present, and *vision* for the future. This third pattern has been discovered in the younger evolutionary history in several stages of the Enlightenment, in which humans learned to attribute effects of their behaviour and actions to themselves instead of to magic powers (education as dialectical interaction).

The last pattern has two intertwined sides and points to tasks beyond a developmentalism which overemphasises growth. In religious education, as in other fields of productive learning, children need initiations into the strange and unknown, into the difficult and the resisting. In a plural world they need the different in order to discover their own. In meeting other religions religious education becomes explicitly learning through difference, by surprise and amidst cognitive or emotional irritations. If teaching glosses over the differences between religions, learning becomes less productive. If the differences exceed the amount of new data which a child can work through, learning easily falls prey to superficial assimilation. Today religious education has to cope with a strong pluralism which should not be boiled down to

a weak one. In my view we need a hermeneutic and educational methodology of mutual recognition in truthfulness of the existing world religions in their specific identity (Nipkow, 1998).

Research in Religious Education

The following examples are taken from sources published in the German language, since empirical studies from the English speaking world are very broadly displayed in this Handbook by other authors. For introductory purposes see the *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie* (57th ed. 2005, Frankfurt: Diesterweg), the *Jahrbuch für Religionspädagogik* (21st ed. 2005, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener); for studies from several European countries see *The Journal of Empirical Theology* (since 1988).

In Germany the modernisation of RE began in the late 1950s with the application of historical-critical exegesis, and the notion of RE as interpretation. It was not until the late 1960s that empirical research started. At the end of the 1970s the first reception of cognitive-structurally based research on moral development took place, drawing on Lawrence Kohlberg. In the 1980s the reception of James W. Fowler and Fritz Oser followed (Nipkow, 1982; Schweitzer, 1987). At the same time the focus was extended also to general life-span studies. Today, studies on faith between modern and postmodern adulthood have been added (Schweitzer, 2003).

The turn to the administration of own empirical analyses began with the qualitative interpretation of the problems young people have with God-related religious issues (Nipkow, 1988). In the 1990s the own activities of children became the main focus: the exploration of religious images, in particular images of God, religious world-views of children, thinking in complementarity, the understanding of symbolic language, concepts of prayer, the development of interpretations of suffering, and the interpretation of Jesus Christ.

Other projects were the comparison of religious socialisation effects in family, youth ministry, confirmation classes and RE in schools, the positive or negative views held about RE as subject in the curriculum, the profile of Catholic RE, the attitudes of Protestant religious educators, a comparison of teachers in RE and ME, and the acquired knowledge about the Bible. As a consequence of learning as 'self-organisation', the 'child as a theologian' and 'children as exegetists' were investigated. This most recent branch of research is called 'Kindertheologie' (children's theology).

A rather new focus was the analysis of instructional interaction processes which were explored from two perspectives: developmental ones such as Fowler's theory, and that of 'elementarisation' (Schweitzer, Nipkow, Faust-Siehl & Krupka, 1995). The four-dimensional concept of 'elementarisation' (developed by K. E. Nipkow since the 1980s, continued and modified by F. Schweitzer in the 1990s) has been presented also to English speaking readers in the context of God, human nature and an education for justice and peace (Nipkow, 2003).

In sum, the fields of research mirror the tensions between the individual and religion, between the private and the public, between developmental and initiating processes, between individual search and burning social issues. More or less the European discussion moves in dialectical pattern of thought.

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RELIGION, VIOLENCE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

John M. Hull

Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education, Birmingham

Introduction

The contribution which religious education might make to peace cannot be discussed without recognising the fact that religion itself is deeply involved in violence (Appleby, 2000; Ellis, 1997; Gorringe, 1996; Juergensmeyer, 2000; Lefebure, 2000). The number of terrorist organisations with a specifically religious orientation has increased steadily over the past couple of decades (Juergensmeyer, 2000, p. 6). Religion is associated either as a principal element or as an associated factor in a majority of the armed conflicts being fought today. Although events such as the attack upon the World Trade Centre in New York in September 2001 and the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq have focused the attention of the media on the role of Islam, the fact is that religious violence can appear in any of the great world religions. We may mention the several Sikh terrorist groups in the Punjab, Hindu extremist political parties in India, the Jewish anti-terrorist groups in Israel, and the right-wing Christian movements in the United States. Even Buddhism has produced the violent sect which released a deadly gas into the Tokyo underground in 1995 (Juergensmeyer, 2000, pp. 102–116).

It is clear that the predictions of the 1960s about growing secularisation have not been realised; on the contrary, since about 1970 there has been a world-wide resurgence of religion, including the activity of religion in public life (Armstrong, 2000; Kepel, 1994). This has included violence in the carrying out of religious/political objectives. The theory and practice of religious education with both children and adults must take account of these developments. Many studies have attempted to find common threads running across the violence of world religions. I will outline a number of theories about the relation between religion and violence, commenting upon the educational response in each case. Rather than taking case

studies of particular acts of religious violence I will deal with the theories from the point of view of the various disciplines within the social and religious sciences: phenomenology, evolutionary biology, anthropology, psychology, cultural studies and finally theology.

Phenomenology of Religion and the Roots of Violence

In his influential book *The Idea of the Holy* (1959), originally published in German in 1917, Rudolph Otto distinguished two aspects of the human experience of the sacred: the fascinating aspect of what Otto called the numinous and, on the other hand, the overwhelming, awe inspiring aspect. In the presence of the holy, people feel irresistibly drawn toward the beauty of holiness, while at the same time there is a sense of dread, of treading upon holy ground, of approaching the infinite. This distinction emphasises the essential ambiguity of religious experience (Appleby, 2000, pp. 28–30). It is both beautiful and terrible. The beauty arouses desire and the terrible inspires fear. These two aspects of the divine appear in the sacred literature of many religions: the Bible and the Qur'an regard God as infinite in mercy, never ending in compassion, always ready to forgive, yet One who is like a consuming fire, before whom one stands as in the presence of the authority of final judgement. In the experience of the mystic there is at once the sense of the gracious presence, and also the infinitely other, who dwells in unapproachable light, or who makes a home in thick darkness.

Such descriptions immediately lead us into an understanding of the emotions of the true believer. When God commands, God must be obeyed, even if it means that the ethical must be suspended. The demand of the Creator is beyond good and evil. The laws of God are beyond discussion, beyond reason. Because they are founded upon the absolute difference between the creature and the Creator the laws of God cannot be qualified or evaded. This leads to what has been called 'terror in the mind of God' (Juergensmeyer, 2000). We shall return to this feature of religion when we come to discuss the theological contribution to our problem.

In turning to the educational implications of the phenomenology of the sacred I do not wish to give the impression that there is an obvious or easy educational approach which could alleviate the stark character of the sacred, or that even with young children teachers ought to dissolve the ambiguity of God into an easy familiarity. On the contrary, too much of our presentation of religion lacks a full and courageous confrontation with extremity. Let us not allow the majesty of the divine to become the comforting presence of a non-threatening niceness. In practice this means that both sides of Otto's phenomenology should be presented. This could be done through a module on religious experience, in which encounters with the divine can be shown in both aspects (Hull, 2002): Moses takes off his sandals; Paul is thrown off his horse and blinded. The night sky speaks of the divine not only in that it fills us with a sense of wonder and awe, but in that it drives us with a shudder back from its eternal silence into the comfort of our living rooms.

Evolutionary Psychology and the Origins of Religious Aggression

Evolutionary psychology has been described as the new science of the mind (Buss, 1999). It has been created as a new discipline in recent decades through a combination of ethology (the study of the adaptation of living creatures to their environment), prehistory (our increasing knowledge of the hundreds of thousands of years of hunter/gatherer society before agriculture and city life emerged) and brain research. The brain can now be understood as the product of millions of years of evolution, and traces of the situations to which thousands of generations have adapted may still be found in the brain (Stevens and Price, 2001, pp. 3–10).

For example, there are approximately 4000 species of mammals but aggressive male gangs appear in only two. In these, there is strong male bonding leading to the formation of marauding groups bent upon attacking and if possible killing members of rival male gangs. The two species are human beings and chimpanzees. There is considerable aggression, mostly male, in many species, but only in chimpanzees and men have these closely knit, organised bands been found. They are usually led by a powerful, dominating individual (Buss, 1999, pp. 278–279). In most bisexual species males are in competition with each other for females, forming hierarchies of male groups, each in conflict. Male bonding, in other words, may be interpreted as an adaptation to intense competition (Badcock, 2000, pp. 165–166). If we stay together we might finish up with something, but if each of us fights alone we will all be killed.

To the phenomenon of male aggression must be added the new interpretation of religious origins offered by evolutionary psychology. The hunting/gathering group of people probably consisted of no more than about 40 individuals, 8 to 10 males, 15 to 20 females and the rest children. As the group grew larger, a point would be reached when it was no longer viable within the resources of the tribal territory. It would have become necessary to gather food further and further from the home base and the hunters would be away for days, exposing the women and children to danger. A crisis might have arisen when the group numbered about 100. The group would then divide, about one third or half of the members attaching themselves to a new leader and moving off to settle a new area. The role of the leader in such tribal splitting would almost certainly be religious—the leader would be a prophet, a shaman, someone imaginative enough to conceive of a new life, a new horizon, and with the personal magnetism to inspire others to the point where they were prepared to abandon their homes and break away. No doubt sometimes this was accompanied by violence, but at other times it may have been peaceful (Stevens and Price, 2001, pp. 147–149).

If religion served this adaptive function in early human societies, enabling survival through the formation of new groups, it is not surprising to find religion still doing this today. Religion binds people together, gives people courage to resist, leads people on long marches, overland treks, to found new societies based on new mythologies. Religion may have been born in conflict and separation, the counter-parts of bonding and solidarity. If I am in solidarity with you, then we are distinct

from them. The distinction between us and them, those for us and those against us, the true god and the false, the faithful and the infidels—such distinctions are typical features of religion.

An educational response would suggest that we should teach more from an anthropological perspective (Nipkow, 2003, 129–142). Prehistory is not finished yet. The fact that in England and Wales religious education has come to consist almost entirely of studies of the modern religions has driven the study of primal religion from the curriculum, and our students are no longer able to understand religion developmentally, symbolically or topically (Hull, 1995a). The role of the vision, ritual, pilgrimage and evangelism is insufficiently understood unless such activities and beliefs are seen to be founded upon features of elementary religion (Nipkow, 2003, pp. 85–98). We should help our pupils understand that the roots of religion go very deep into human life, and meet basic human needs. This need not diminish the stature of religion in the eyes of students, nor on the other hand will it necessarily make religion more attractive. But it will impart a deeper understanding of religion and it will certainly make the study of religion more interesting.

Anthropological and Sociological Perspectives on Religious Violence

We shall now consider René Girard, probably the most influential scholar writing on religious violence in recent years. Girard is an anthropologist but uses primal materials to throw light on contemporary social problems, and he is also a brilliant interpreter of mythology and sacred literature. Girard distinguishes between biological desire and socially stimulated desire. Human desire is not satisfied when basic biological needs for food, reproduction, shelter and security are met. There is a kind of desire, perhaps not unique to humans, a non-biological, purely general desire, which is stimulated and shaped by imitation. We desire what we see others desire, and if we admire other people, our desire for what they want is all the sharper (Girard, 2001, pp. 19–31; Hammerton-Kelly, 1992 pp. 92–94). Thus we model ourselves upon an admired person, shaping our longings by what the model desires. Many a man has found his wife more attractive when he finds out that another man desires her, and the pleasure of winning a prize is diminished if it is realised that yours was the only entry. The model quickly becomes the rival, because he or she stands in the way of our possessing what we both want. Desire for the object then turns into resentment against the one who has it already (Hammerton-Kelly, 1992, pp. 19–24).

In a society of symbolic merchandising, where there is so much to desire and so many people who have many desirable things, intense competition is stimulated. This is whipped up by advertising and by the spectacle of consumption. We want the fun that we see others having, and often the reason we want it is no more than that others have it. We compare ourselves with others and want what they have. Competition spreads out like waves across society, driven by envy (Hull, 2001). Finally, this will lead to violence. Girard uses the symbol Satan to describe this social process (Girard, 2001, pp. 182–183). At this point, something happens. The

violence is turned away from society itself toward a group or an individual who becomes a scapegoat. This will be a group or person who already stands out in some way, already weaker, marginalised; and all the disappointment and frustration of society is discharged upon the scapegoat, who is expelled or killed. Social tension is released; the boil has burst. People are at peace again, temporarily united in the satisfaction of having expelled the source of the evil in their midst. However, the cycle will soon begin again.

Girard believes that the sacred literature of the world reveals these features of competition, violence and scapegoating (Girard, 2001, pp. 61–70). The Christian faith, however, is an exception. In other religions the mechanisms of scapegoating are invisible and therefore exercise an uncontrollable fascination, but in the story of the crucifixion of Jesus, the mechanism is revealed (Girard, 2001, pp. 103–120). Instead of the scapegoat being regarded as evil, the documents emphasise the innocence of the victim. In the New Testament Pilate and Herod become friends when the death sentence has been passed upon Jesus. The cycle of envy and violence is broken when we identify with the innocent victim and not with the competitive society. As Christians die with Jesus Christ, a reversal of values takes place (Hammerton-Kelly, 1992, pp. 68–71). When enough people realise the way the mechanism works and are delivered from its power by identification with the victim there will be no more victims. The need for violence, and the religious character of violence, will have vanished (Hammerton-Kelly, 1992, pp. 180–182).

The educational implications of Girard's approach are suggestive. His work stimulates our study of the role of money in our culture and the function of symbolic commodities in shaping the dreams and desires of our children (Hull, 1999). We are reminded that education of the emotions, especially the emotions of desire, are important in religious education. Girard offers new perspectives on the significance of the death of Jesus, enabling us to escape from the slogan 'Christ died for our sins', an idea that is often not explained, or only explained in terms no longer meaningful. The result is that the notion becomes sentimental and merely repetitive, but the insights of Girard may help young people to realise that in a contemporary sense the scapegoat is always suffering for the sins of society. Girard also throws light upon much religious mythology, although his negative attitude toward other religions seems exaggerated and opportunistic (Lefebure, 2000, pp. 29–30).

The Psychology of Religious Violence

Much conflict between human beings and societies can be understood as a clash of identities, precipitated by a challenge to identity, or a defence against a weakened, confused, or broken identity. Religion is a powerful source of identity, and this can give rise to conflict. The writings of Ruhullah Khomeini (1902–1989) offer insights into the self-understanding of a great religion when it has lost its identity, or is perceived to have been humiliated and fragmented by secular and alien forces. There is a vivid moment in his thought when Khomeini grapples with the saying of Jesus, whom he reveres and admires, about the possibility of non resistance to

violence. 'This idea of turning the other cheek has been wrongly attributed to Jesus (peace be upon him). It is those barbaric imperialists that have attributed it to him. Jesus was a prophet, and no prophet can be so illogical' (Khomeini, 1985, p. 219). 'Is it possible that such a person could utter such apathetic, cowardly words?' (Khomeini, 1985, p. 225). Such teaching, Khomeini concludes, has made Christians passive towards their capitalistic governments. Religions can become violent when their political identity becomes strong as well as when it has become disintegrated. The history of violent conversion and forced baptism of the European church in the medieval and colonial periods illustrates this, and lends weight to Khomeini's charge that Christians have betrayed and corrupted the teaching of Jesus.

Erikson distinguished between the identity of totality and the identity of wholism (Erikson, 1968, pp. 80–81), and we may compare these types of identity with exclusive and inclusive types of religion. There is a kind of religious identity that feeds upon dichotomy, the saved and the lost, the elect and the damned, the true and the false, the revealed and the natural, the heavenly and the earthly. The narcissistic psychology of Heinz Kohut (1971) has shown how a weak self-image can be bolstered through identification with an all-powerful divinity. Believers know that although they are unworthy, they are chosen by God. This knowledge brings about a transformation of identity, but when this is expressed in terms of us and them, religious experience begins to take sectarian forms. If a religious group feels itself to be under threat the source of the danger may be demonised, which is one aspect of delirious perception (Gabel, 1975, pp. 14–15).

It seems likely that the shock to the American identity caused by the events of September 11th 2001 and the subsequent sense of vulnerability led to a kind of delirious perception of enemies, whether real or imaginary, such that evidence was selected, mis-interpreted and even perceived in documents where it would not otherwise have been noticed. Delirious perception supported by the piety of religious fervour was a contributory factor in the otherwise inexplicable execution of a war against a country which had not invaded the United States, had not threatened to do so, and whose potential to do so was unclear. Delirious perception may also account for at least part of the sense of oppression and outrage felt throughout the Islamic world at the domination of a Godless secular culture (Kepel, 2002). These aspects of identity do not imply that the United States was not vulnerable, nor that parts of the Islamic world did not have real grounds for complaint, but the religious character of a dichotomised world view does become delirious in times of conflict, and leads to a spiral of violence. The other is no longer perceived as human but as a devil. In the Iraq war, both the president of the United States, George Bush, and the president of Iraq, Sadaam Hussein, invoked the name of God, and described the opponent as evil and even demonic.

When negative images of the religion of others are used to bolster the threatened identity of religious individuals or groups, we may say that religion has become Religionism (Hull, 1998). Erikson combined his psychological insight with his understanding of ethology when he spoke of pseudo-speciation (Erikson, 1968, pp. 41–42). Under threat, the tribe closes around its symbolic centres of identity and

power, becoming a kind of species within its species. People from other cultures and tribes are treated as if they actually belong to a different species: not even having our nature, not sharing the same kind of minds or souls as us. One can see this operating politically in situations of racist oppression, but the sense of religious mission on the part of the pseudo-species, those who are called out from the wicked mass, is often associated with a feeling of racial purity, giving racism a religious quality which makes it far more dangerous.

Religious education can make a contribution to understanding and perhaps restraining the occurrence of exclusive forms of religious identity, leading to greater toleration (Appleby, 2000, pp. 72–78). In order to do this with success a new kind of anti-religionistic religious education should be created, comparable to the anti-racist and anti-sexist kinds of education. In this respect we should examine the structures of an educational system and its curriculum. It is sometimes said that children should be educated in single-faith rather than in multi-faith groups. The single-faith group is said to protect and nourish identity whilst the child is young, and to offer a secure basis from which dialogue with others can be conducted later. On the other hand, it may be that religious identity is strengthened in multi-faith classrooms. Children may become more aware of their family tradition when they are taught alongside children from different backgrounds. No one doubts that religious communities are entitled to worship and to study together, and the parental right to bring one's children up in the family tradition is seldom challenged. However, when home, school and religious community offer a single context for the development of spirituality, one wonders whether there is enough possibility for a guided meeting with others.

Similar questions may be asked about the curriculum. Should religions be taught as enclosed systems, or should they be studied thematically, with more flexible boundaries? Should not children become familiar with more than one system of religion and value? The new emphasis upon teaching through the life-world of the child seems to possess clear advantages (Heimbrock Schielke and Schreiner, 2001). Life-world pedagogy contributes to citizenship education (Jackson, 2003) and tends to develop a critical faithfulness to one's own religious tradition, if any, combined with respect and even affection for others.

Cultural Theories of Religious Conflict

One interpretation of religious violence is that it breaks out under the influence of postmodernism, when cultural relativism seems to threaten the integrity of religion (Armstrong, 2000). It is useful at this point to remember the distinction made in the history of religion between primal religion, which is non-competitive, the world religions of the axial period (approximately 1000 BCE—1000 CE), which are highly competitive towards each other, and the post-axial religious period, when religions exist side by side, creating both unprecedented hostility and remarkable new forms of co-operation. It is suggested that the break-up of traditional ways of life, and the difficulty of achieving confident possession of the truth, is contributing

to a kind of identity mania (Meyer, 2001). This finds expression in the emergence of fundamentalist interpretations of religion, which claim to be the pure, residual kernel of faith, from which the majority of believers has departed.

The need for strong, uncontroversial guidance in a complex, baffling world draws people into these fundamentalist enclosures. The borders around these groups become very sharp, and although fundamentalist religions may collaborate briefly against what they see as the decadence and indifference of secularity, they must ultimately come into conflict with each other since their mode of relation to each other is that of conversion, not dialogue. The cultural conflict theory of Samuel Huntington (1996) argues that the nationalist politics of the nineteenth century, and the ideological politics of the twentieth, have been succeeded by the identity politics of the present day. The world is divided into six or seven cultural regions, in most of which religion occupies a central, defining role. The most significant of these is the distinction between the Christian West and Islam. This conflict has taken the place of the earlier competition between capitalism and communism. An irreconcilable gulf, according to Huntington, has opened up between Christian and Islamic cultures.

The school can do a great deal to prepare children for cultural variety, and religious education has an important part to play. Many schools have established links with schools in various cultural regions of the world. This helps schools to present a global curriculum and not merely a national one. Older students can become familiar with cultural theories, but the approach of Huntington, which sees religious conflict as inevitable, shows it can best be overcome by the common sense of human friendship. When you have experienced the honesty and loyalty of people from different religious cultures it becomes more difficult to believe that conflict is inevitable, and the superficiality of Huntington's approach becomes evident. The variety within each religion is just as striking as the differences between them (Meyer, 2001), and civilisations, like schools, become creative through sharing.

Theology and Religious Violence

Religious fanaticism, which may under certain conditions lead to violence, is a complex of psychological, sociological and other factors. Attempts to prevent the appearance of fanaticism or to help religious people to emerge from fanaticism tend to be ineffective. A principal reason for this lies in the religious believer's perception that nothing outside religion itself can sit in judgement over it. Thus the believer will not allow the social sciences to critique faith, and even reason itself is no match for the immediacy of the divine authority. In other words, the nature of unqualified commitment and the absolute character of the religious truth protect the believer from educational intervention, which may be regarded as coming from secular, humanist, or even godless sources. The techniques of religious studies and the methods of multi-religious education are no exception.

When they were told not to preach about Jesus, Peter and John replied that they must obey God rather than human authorities (Acts 4:19). This affirmation not only secures individual conscience, but also limits the power of the state, which can so easily assume divine authority over its citizens. As an example of this from more recent times, we might consider the interview Ruhulluh Khomeini gave Hamid Algar on December 29th 1978. Khomeini attributed the Iranian revolution to the traditional resistance of the Shi'ites towards political authority; whereas, he suggests, in the Sunni tradition there has usually been a tendency to submit to authority (Khomeini, 1985, p. 327). For people like Khomeini, the absolute quality of religious loyalty relativises all other claims. That is the liberating benefit of transcendence, but what is to protect individuals and cultures from the absolute claims of religion itself? The history of religious conflict in our generation makes this question urgent. Who is to relativise the relativisers? To criticise the ultimate critic? From what source of ultimate value is the absolute value to be evaluated? (Khomeini, 1985, p. 326–327).

These questions bring us to the heart of the problem of religion and terror. Is obedience to my religion such that I can be commanded to do anything in the name, and for the sake, of my religion? Is the survival of religion more important than the survival of people? And if the authority of religion is to be harnessed, reigned in by some other source of authority, will not religion lose its numinous quality, its transcendence? What can be more transcendent than the transcendent itself? If any attempt were made to relativise religion from outside religion, from secular or humanist points of view, religious believers might feel compelled to reject it. Although the social sciences and psychology may contribute to emancipation from fanaticism, their role is likely to be supplementary rather than fundamental. The reason for this lies in the fact that the religious believer may not acknowledge the legitimacy of any point of view outside religion as a source of critique over religion. Let God be God! Even reason itself is subordinate to the divine revelation, and fanatical belief fastens upon a select aspect of faith, relativising everything else in the faith to the supreme demand of a particular item within it.

The problem of religious fanaticism is thus essentially theological. This is understood in at least some of the literature where it is recommended that believers should be educated concerning the teachings of their own tradition on peace. It is frequently pointed out that the major religions all teach peace. However, it seems unlikely that selecting this apparently relevant content will succeed in diverting the fanatical mind from its purpose, for under certain conditions the peaceful purpose of religion may be suspended in the interests of the survival of the faith itself. A more radical theological approach is necessary.

Only theology itself can speak to this situation, for theology deals with the nature of faith from the inside. Nothing can judge faith but faith itself. Only faith can relativise faith. Most major religions possess internal criteria for self-transcendence. If the religious believer can realise the implications of continual self-relativisation, absolute allegiance is itself relativised. A faith which is relativised is less likely to become fanatical, while at the same time unqualified loyalty to faith is preserved.

Faith makes an absolute claim upon the believer, and the absolute character of this cannot be challenged. The believer will describe any such process as compromising or diluting the faith. It is therefore within absoluteness itself that we must find the way forward. But how can this be done?

Relative Absoluteness and Absolute Relativity

In religious faith the absolute can only be qualified by itself. Absoluteness when qualified by its own character becomes relative to itself. Religion responds to the transcendent, and only the transcendent can transcend itself. This principle of continual self-relativisation takes distinct forms within each religious tradition. Various religious systems may present different concepts of their inner relationship towards absoluteness, and may construe differently their position with respect to politics and power. Within Christian faith the character of this self-surpassing faith has been developed in different ways by two leading philosophical theologians of the later middle twentieth century: Paul Tillich (1886–1965) and Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000).

Charles Hartshorne

‘God is the not conceivably surpassable being’ (Hartshorne, 1967, p. 17). Hartshorne argues that the concept of God as being unsurpassable means that while God cannot be surpassed by anything else, God can surpass God. ‘God is the self-surpassing surpasser of all’ (Hartshorne, 1948, p. 20). For example, God’s knowledge expands as the increasing novelty in the universe means that there is always more to know, and God’s mercy abounds more and more as more and more people become objects of divine mercy. God is not static being but dynamic becoming. As the value in the world increases, God, as the one who encompasses all value, continually includes it, and so is always surpassing God.

Paul Tillich

Tillich regards the central principle of Protestantism as consisting of continual self-criticism in the light of continual reinterpretation of scripture. Indeed, he suggests, this is a characteristic of truth itself. ‘It [truth] stands critically over against every realisation, as is clearly understood by genuine Protestantism’ (Tillich, 1957, p. 14). The Protestant view of the church, for example, regards it as constantly standing under the judgement of the coming Kingdom of God, whereas in absolute views of the historical church, the Church itself partakes in the divine authority and is thus less available for criticism and less open to the truly new (Tillich, pp. 35–36). This principle of ‘self-transcending truth’ becomes a critical protest against all absolute claims. ‘The Protestant principle...contains the divine and human protest against any absolute claim made for a relative reality, even if this claim is made by a Protestant church’ (p. 163). This leads Tillich to expand his thought into a

philosophical distinction between the Unconditioned and human finitude. We never fully grasp the truth which has grasped us because the finite cannot fully comprehend the infinite (p. 163). Unless this principle is applied, religions themselves and ideologies become 'objects of belief and fanaticism' (p. 170).

Implications for Faithful Spirituality

These principles lead us to the view that whatever the contemporary interpretation of the Bible might be, or whatever our understanding of the divine will might be, it is always subject to continual revision. The fanatical mind believes that it has absolute possession of the divine, but when faith is better understood it is seen that faith is called to continual self-criticism. This has two results: the fanatical narrowing upon a particular thought is prevented by the knowledge that that point may not be as ultimate as one thinks, and the confidence of extremism is humbled by the thought that God is greater. The hand of Abraham, stretched out to slay his son, was arrested. No present attainment or conception or policy of religion can be given absolute priority over the mission of the religion itself. Nothing from the outside commands religion, and yet actual religion is continually relativised by its own inner principle and its ultimate goal. God is unsurpassable; unsurpassable that is by anything except God. Only the transcendent can transcend itself. Religion must continually relativise itself by surpassing itself. This approach can be articulated in several ways.

The Instrumentality of Religion

Religions must be regarded as instrumental, not in the sense that religion is to be utilised by art, culture or by the nation-state but in the name of the ultimate mission of all religion: life itself. Religions point to life, they direct human beings toward more abundant life; they represent the most highly developed systems and techniques for the spirituality that is the fullness of life. Just as an approach to spiritual development understands it as taking place through a series of self-transcending stages, so religion, one of the principal agents of human development, also advances by means of a series of self-surpassing modes.

The realisation of this may pass through three stages, and we can illustrate these by reference to three stages of an attitude towards a knife. First, it is believed that the nature of the knife is to be sharp. In the second stage, it is understood that the knife is sharpened in order that it may cut. In the third stage, it is seen that the nature or the mission of the knife is not lost in the process of its cutting but fulfilled. In other words, at first one may think that religion is absolute. It is for itself. This necessarily means one's own religion, one's own interpretation or experience of faith. Indeed, it is typical of religious experience to come home to one with an infinite otherness, creating a sense of absolute dependence. Nevertheless, religious experience does not exist for its own sake. When that happens, religious experience is fanaticised and faith itself becomes an idol (Babić, 2002).

In the second stage of religious insight it is realised that religion is for something; religion has its own intrinsic destiny and vocation. The human is not for religion, but religion is for the human and ultimately for the divine. The two sides of this expression highlight the ambiguity of religion with which this chapter began. Moreover, in suggesting this approach, I am aware that it must come under the same principle. This means that I cannot present this as a final solution but only as an intermediate approach which must be subjected to continual revision. In the third stage, one realises that one becomes true to one's religion by being false to it. Religion that continually surpasses itself is more faithful to itself than religion that always looks to its past achievements and its present situation.

Religion and the Believing Community

Here is another way of describing this situation. Muslims often speak as if Islam belongs to Muslims. The welfare of Muslims is identified with the mission of Islam. Christians often do the same sort of thing. People in church describe themselves as the people of God, and the church itself is often described by Christians as being the household of God. Christians often speak as if there was some particular advantage in being Christian, as if the Christian tradition was to serve the interests, prosperity, security and future happiness of Christians.

When people in a religion think like this, the religion is tribalised. When the interests of a religion are identified with the interests of the community that practises the religion, the result is religious communalism, religious tribalisation, and religious pseudo-speciation. The truth is that we, as a community, do not possess a religion. It is not the religion of *our* community, because we ourselves are more than members of our communities. The religion has us, and when religion takes possession of us, we are not called to serve the interests of religion only, but to share in the mission of religion. So in the first way of describing this situation, people are not for religion in the sense that narrow and exclusive religion does not have the right to claim absolute authority. In the second way of speaking of it, religion does not belong to people, in the sense that the religious community has no special command over the religion, which is greater than the community that bears its name.

Religious Borders, Uniqueness and Syncretism

In this third way of describing the situation, I shall speak in more explicitly Christian terms. When Jesus said that anyone who does the will of God is his brother, sister and mother (Mark 3:35) he was surely speaking like a Muslim, just as when Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness (Gal. 3:6) he was surely acting like a Christian. For if Christ died for all, then all are dead (2 Cor. 5:14). All have died, and in that common death there is neither Jew nor Christian, Muslim nor humanist, but a new humanity (Gal. 3:28). In these ways, Christian faith points beyond itself. This is not to suggest that one day a common religion will emerge. There are no hard and fast borders between religions, but I do

not anticipate syncretism either. On the contrary, as each religion is faithful to its vocation, the distinctive features of each may appear with greater clarity. Clarity and distinctiveness does not mean rivalry and competition. From a Christian point of view all things are ours, whether life or death, things present or to come (1 Cor. 3:22), whether plurality or post-modernity, all things are ours, and we are to live in and through them by the power of the Spirit, transforming them and disciplining them and ourselves toward the mission of God for life. This is not to say that 'ours' means 'ours as Christians' but rather 'ours as human'. Not only are all things ours, but we are Christ's, and Christ's is God's (1 Cor. 3:23), and when the end comes, Christ will yield up the kingdom to God, and God shall be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28). So Christian faith continually transcends itself.

These passages, indicating the subordination of the Son to the Father, are significant for this argument, and we could add 'the Father is greater than I am' (John 14:28) and many others. The paradox of absoluteness and relativity in this conception of Christ is also to be found in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Jesus Christ is subordinate to God his father, and yet within the Trinity God the Son is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. As Son, he is both equal and not equal, and as a religion, Christian faith in Christ is both absolute and yet relative. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity may be thought of as the church's way of relativising Jesus, who cannot now become an idol, for God is also Father and Son and Spirit. Moreover, the Trinity itself cannot become an idol, or perhaps we should rather say that our understanding of the Trinity cannot become an idol, for the Trinity is a future Trinity, one that was, and is, and is to come (Hull, 1995b).

A similar logic of self-transcendence is probably to be found in all sophisticated religions. In Islam, for example, the affirmation that God is great may suggest that God is greater than our thoughts of God, or our obedience to God as we presently understand it. Similarly the concept of the oneness of God, which is central in Islam, may indicate some such process. The realisation of the divine unity is always ongoing and never complete. Moreover, the very nature of the Qur'an demands a process of continual interpretation. 'The Qur'an is not a book that someone can interpret comprehensively and exhaustively, for its sciences are unique and ultimately beyond our understanding' (Khomeini, 1985, p. 365). Therefore, one can only offer 'a possibility, not a certainty' (Khomeini, 1985, p. 366). This is the basis of the idea of the many veils that cover the Qur'an, each one leading to a deeper truth, and 'God has seventy thousand veils of light and of darkness.' 'Veils of light are no less veils for being composed of light but *we* have not even emerged from the veils of darkness' (p. 396). Even the central idea of Islam, the unity of God, may become a veil.

A religious faith which does not possess or cannot develop a concept of self-transcendence whereby it relativises itself in the name of its own mission is bound to become a veil or a fetish. Then the particularity of a given religion becomes absolute, and the way is opened up for fanaticism and terror. If we can teach our children this understanding of faith, whether we are Christian, Muslim or some other, we will prepare our children not only for loyalty to their own traditions,

but for contributing to the peace and welfare of humanity. But if not, if we are tempted to teach absolute and unchanging faith, the full implications of which we think we realise, then faith will become a fetish, and education will no longer be an instrument of peace.

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CATHOLIC CHURCH DOCUMENTS ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Dr. G. P. (Joe) Fleming

Religious Education Consultant, Australia

Introduction

In the discourse about religious education in the Catholic Church one of the greatest difficulties has been with language and definition. The meanings of terms such as evangelisation, catechesis, religious education, education in religion, religious studies and religious instruction are confused, often lack clarity, and at other times are used with contradictory meanings. Moran (1971, 1983, 1984, 1989) has been a consistent voice in the debate about the language of religious education, and the difficulties that are faced in developing a systematic and cohesive language. The issue of language, Moran argued in 1971, had reached the point where there was a crisis of religious education that emerged ‘from the relationship between the two words *religious* and *education*’ (Moran, 1971, p. 18). He concluded in the late 1990s:

Despite the term’s limitations, I do not know a better term in English to refer to all the possible relations between religion and education (Harris & Moran, 1998, p. 7).

Other researchers have echoed Moran’s concern about the language of religious education. In the USA, Boys referred to the language issue as being ‘characterised by endemic confusion and conflicting directions’ (Boys, 1982, p. 128). In the United Kingdom, Nichols commented on the confusion between the language of catechesis and religious education and stated that ‘catechesis is a square peg in this educational hole’ (Nichols, 1979, p. 17).

A number of simple steps can be taken to help an accurate reading of the texts about religious education. The reader needs to be clear about the authorship, purpose and context of the particular document being read. For example, both *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) and *The Catholic School on the Threshold of*

the Third Millennium (1998) have a focus on catechesis and religious education in a broad sense. A critical factor to keep in mind, apart from these two documents being thirty years apart historically, is that *Gravissimum Educationis* is addressed to the broad educational mission of the Church and parish, and that *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* is addressed to schools. Therefore these documents have different audiences, purposes and meanings.

While different documents use the same term, e.g., catechesis and religious education, the context in which the term is used may require an adjustment of meaning and interpretation. For example, when 'catechesis' is being used in the context of family life it has a different meaning from the same term being used in the classroom teaching of religious education. There is a need to be careful of the uncritical transference of terms from one context to another, thus making the assumption that there is a single meaning to the term. Understandably the broad focus of Church documents is the mission of the Church in the world and its commitment to evangelisation and catechesis. Catholic schools throughout the world are an extraordinary example of this missionary activity, and are therefore, by implication, places where evangelisation and catechesis can take place. Nevertheless, the question needs to be raised whether the terms evangelisation and catechesis are the most appropriate to, or are synonymous with, a theory and practice of religious education as it occurs in specific classrooms.

An Analysis of Selected Documents on Catechesis and Religious Education in Catholic Schools

Commonly Cited Documents

The literature of religious education reveals that the following documents are regularly cited as important documents in the development of religious education theory (Ryan, 1997; Malone, 1992; Rummery, 1980; Regan, 1999). This analysis seeks to determine aspects of religious education as contained in the documents that are of most relevance for the development of a theory of religious education for Catholic schools.

The Declaration on Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis (GE) – 1965

The Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis (GE)*, was promulgated in the last session of Vatican II in 1965. The use of the term 'Christian' in the title denotes an ecumenical perspective on education and reflects the intent of Vatican II to address its message to a broader audience than just members of the Catholic Church. Bracketing the word 'education' with Christian is an indication of the importance of education within a quest for faith.

In his commentary on GE, G. Carter stated that in it ‘the Church comes directly to grips with the problem of formal education, particularly in schools’ (1966, p. 634), as opposed to education within a broader Church context. Carter adds that GE ‘deals only with a few fundamental principles and that a more developed point of view is being left to a special post-concilia Commission and to the Conferences of Bishops’ (p. 634).

A theoretical understanding of religious education is not referred to separately in this document but rather exists almost as a sub-category within a broad definition of education. GE argues that all people have a right to education and that:

...true education aims at the formation of the human person with respect to his [*sic*] goal, and simultaneously with respect to the good of those societies of which, as a man [*sic*], he [*sic*] is a member, and in whose responsibilities, as an adult, he [*sic*] will share (Abbott, 1967, par. 1).

These dimensions of religious education are not restricted to schooling, but are seen more generally as part of the Church’s mission to announce ‘salvation to all men [*sic*]’ (Abbott, 1967, par. 3). Religious education is more than imparting knowledge merely for knowledge’s sake. It is an aid to salvation. Significantly, however, there is no mention of the content and methodology of religious education. The preparation of content material in religious education is seen as the task of the local bishop. There is also an absence of the words and concepts of ‘evangelisation’ and particularly of ‘catechesis’ that proliferate in other Church documents. The focus here instead is on broad, general principles of Christian education.

Some sections of GE relate to the role of the teacher and as such build a broad theory of this role in a Catholic school (pars. 8–9). It is important to note that the document refers to all teachers and there is no specific mention of the religious education teacher. It is stated that the role of the teacher is vital—so vital in fact that, in the view of GE, it is all teachers who ‘determine whether the Catholic school can bring its goals and undertakings to fruition’ (par. 8). Furthermore, reference is made to the necessity of having teachers in the role who are certified and have the qualifications that are necessary for the task. Finally, in relation to teachers it is stressed that they give witness by the ways in which they live and teach. The act of teaching is one of witness, and it implies a synchronicity between the message and the messenger. The implication contained in the term ‘witness’ suggests that the teacher is more like a ‘catechist’, one who shares faith and the faith journey with students and is a fellow believer. Such implications raise serious questions relating to who teaches and coordinates religious education in Catholic schools, as well as the purpose of religious education itself.

In constructing theoretical understandings of the role of a school, the document proposes that all schools ripen ‘the capacity for right judgement’ (par. 5). They provide ‘an introduction into the cultural heritage won by past generations’ as well as promoting ‘a sense of values’ (par. 5), and prepare students for ‘professional life’ (par. 5). In addition to the pursuit of cultural goals that are common to all schools,

the Catholic school is 'distinctive' as it tries to create 'an atmosphere enlivened by the gospel spirit of freedom and charity' (par. 8).

On Evangelisation in the Modern World, Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN) – 1976

The document on evangelisation was promulgated more than ten years after Vatican II. Thomas Walters claimed that this 'exhortation is the first church document devoted entirely to the topic of evangelisation' (Walters, 1996, p. 150). EN was written in response to the 'profound changes of present-day society' (par. 14) and described the task of evangelisation as 'proper to the Church, her deepest identity' (par. 14). In particular, EN explores the cultures in which evangelisation takes place and the need for the Church to work with and within the culture. It seeks to balance respect for the tradition of the Catholic Church with the needs of the culture within which the tradition resides (par. 67). This engagement of the Church with the world, and a recognition that the Church exists within particular cultures of the world, had been promulgated in the *Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World* at Vatican II. EN represents the continued search by the Church to communicate and dialogue with an increasingly secular society.

A critical point is the connection that EN makes between evangelisation, catechesis and religious education. Evangelising is defined as 'bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity' (par. 18) while its purpose is 'interior change' (par. 18). This theory of evangelisation is exercised in the preaching of the good news, the gospel, to all people, and is an invitation to all people to respond in faith. Traditionally the term 'evangelisation' was applied to missionaries who went to 'non-Christian lands' and who gave witness in deed and word to the person of Jesus. EN expands that concept of Christian evangelisation and applies it to all people as part of their ongoing journey of life. All people are called to be witnesses to Jesus (par. 21).

Further dimensions of the term 'evangelisation' in EN include catechetical instruction and religious instruction:

A means of evangelisation that must not be neglected is that of catechetical instruction. The intelligence, especially that of children and young people, needs to learn through systematic religious instruction the fundamental teachings, the living content of the truth which God has wished to convey to us (par. 44).

EN links evangelisation and catechetical instruction to systematic religious instruction of young people within the broad cultural, evangelical and missionary activity of the Church. EN further argues that catechetical instruction is broader than schools and refers specifically to what occurs within the Church and within homes (par. 44). However, a less than careful reading of the text could lead to the conclusion that evangelisation and catechesis is the primary task of religious education in schools. There is a link between these areas of religious education, but they are not synonymous.

Catechesis in Our Time, Catechesi Tradendae (CT) – 1979

Pope John Paul II promulgated *Catechesi Tradendae* (CT) in November 1979. Historically this document emerged from the Fourth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 1977 with the theme of catechesis in relation to children and young people. CT was an ‘important landmark in the history of the post war catechetical movement’ (Rummery, 1980, p. 27), because it was a document solely directed to this chief work of the Church, namely, catechesis. CT is almost entirely devoted to issues of the broader Church with only one section of the seventy-three relating to schools. This is not a document where the religious dimension of schools is central, nor is it a document where religious education curriculum is expanded, or a theory of religious education is developed.

Because ‘catechesis’ is a word that is often misused in connection with religious education, care needs to be taken to determine what this document says about catechesis. Similar to evangelisation in EN, catechesis in CT is much broader than schools and is a term that applies to the total educational mission of the Church. In the opening paragraph the historical understanding of catechesis is made explicit: the ‘Church has always considered catechesis one of her primary tasks’ (par. 1). Catechesis was the name ‘given to the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples, to help people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God’ (par. 1). In this sense, all of what the Church does is catechesis.

The primary setting of catechesis is the parish: ‘It is true that catechesis can be given anywhere, but I wish to stress...that the parish community must continue to be the prime mover and pre-eminent place for catechesis’ (par. 67). While parishes are the primary places for catechesis, CT takes into account other diverse places where catechesis could be supported, such as chaplaincies in state schools and Catholic educational institutions (par. 67). The role of the religious education curriculum in the schools is to support catechesis, not to be a substitute for it. Nevertheless, the document returns to emphasise that the central place of catechesis is the parish: ‘In short, without monopolising or enforcing uniformity, the parish remains, as I have said, the pre-eminent place for catechesis’ (par. 67).

CT also reinforces the links between catechesis and evangelisation. Catechesis and evangelisation ‘have close links whereby they integrate and complement each other’ (par. 18), and between which ‘there is no separation or opposition’ (par. 18). Evangelisation is the first step of the process that leads to catechesis:

To put it more precisely: within the whole process of evangelisation, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord, and having given him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart ... (par. 20).

CT also states that ‘the specific aim of catechesis is to develop, with God’s help, an as yet initial faith, and to advance in fullness and to nourish day by day the Christian

life of the faithful' (par. 20). Following the directions of CT itself, catechesis occurs pre-eminently in parishes and families.

A further point in CT relates to the methods of catechesis, and is influenced by educational insights at the time the document was written. The methods by which catechesis is undertaken require 'revision', a 'search for suitable language' and 'the utilisation of new means of transmitting the message' (par. 17). In addressing the controversy of the time over traditional or life-centred approaches to catechesis the document is clear: 'Nor is any opposition to be set up between a catechesis taking life as its starting point of departure and a traditional, doctrinal and systematic catechesis' (par. 22).

CT also examines the place that catechesis has in a Catholic school. In relation to catechesis the document says that 'together with and in connection with the family, the school provides catechesis with possibilities that are not to be neglected' (par. 69). One of these possibilities lies within religious instruction:

The special character of the Catholic school, the underlying reason for it, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils (par. 69).

The term 'catechesis' should not be uncritically transferred from its rightful context within parishes and substituted for 'religious education' in Catholic schools. The interchanging of the terms without regard for their different contexts has resulted in an inappropriate understanding of the purposes and nature of religious education as it relates to Catholic schools.

Documents from the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy

Content of the GCD

Historically this document is the first attempt after Vatican II to systematically reformulate the goals of the Church in relation to religious education. It expresses clearly that the task of the teaching Church is catechesis, and it sets out the content of catechesis. The 'intent of this Directory is to provide the basic principles of pastoral theology' (Foreword, p. 1) rather than to present doctrinal theology or a systematic expression of beliefs that are more appropriate to a Catechism. Pastoral theology and the practicalities that emerge for Catholic schools are the responsibility of the local bishop.

Catechesis (pars. 21–23) is aimed to bring individuals to maturity of faith and to deepen their conversion and witness to the faith. The people involved in the task of catechesis, namely catechists, as well as leading a life of witness, must also be competent in what they do. The GCD recognises the impact that developments in specialist fields of knowledge have on catechesis, and urges catechists to 'use the help which can be given by the sacred sciences, theology, Bible studies, pastoral thought and the human sciences' (par. 9). Drawing upon this knowledge, the catechists can select a pedagogical method that takes into account the life

circumstances of those being catechised (par. 46). As catechists they function as agents in the socialisation process with the primary aim of promoting faith and commitment. What is at issue here is the degree to which religious education teachers in Catholic schools should be called 'catechists', and the degree to which they are more suitably called 'religious education teachers'.

The GCD's primary focus is the pastoral dimension of the Church, as well as the role that catechesis plays in the educational dimension of the Church. Of far less concern in this document is education within the context of schooling. In the index of the GCD there are only four references to education, and one to schoolchildren. The GCD's theoretical framework is catechetical and not educational. This is evidenced most strongly in the term that is used in the GCD for those involved in catechesis, and that is 'catechist'. This is a Catholic Church term used to denote activities in parishes. In school educational settings the term 'teacher' is used for those involved in religious education. These terms imply vastly different processes and assumptions, should not be considered the same, and should not be used interchangeably. Furthermore, the terms 'evangelisation' and 'catechesis' as they are used in the document imply, and call for, a faith response, a conversion. It is questionable whether within the restrictions of the school classroom such responses are possible or suitable. On the other hand, one of the strengths of the document is its view on pedagogy in religious education:

The Directory refers repeatedly to the need to teach a traditional truth in a modern and scientific and pluralist world, through creative structures, and to teach not merely by repeating ancient doctrine but rather adapting it to new problems with a growing understanding of it (Welbourne, 1995, p. 104).

The document encourages the use of varied methodologies that have grown out of new understandings and does not intend to limit the methodologies to the method used in Catechisms.

The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) – 1997

The rewriting of the 1972 directory in 1997 provided an occasion for the Congregation of the Clergy to incorporate the directions of the documentary heritage of the previous twenty-five years. The 'Preface' to the GDC stresses that one of the aims of the directory was to strike a balance between two principles that were to be found in other Church documents. The two principles were 'the contextualisation of catechesis in evangelisation as envisaged by *Evangelii Nuntiandi*' and 'the appropriation of the content of the faith as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*' (pp. 14–15). It reiterated that, as with the previous directory, this document seeks to provide pastoral principles as guidelines for the production of national and diocesan directories and materials related to catechesis (par. 9). Similarly to the GCD, this second directory allocated only three paragraphs out of 291 to the nature of the religious education program of Catholic schools. Both documents have limited statements on religious education in schools. Consequently, it is clear from

both directories that the primary understanding of catechesis belongs to the whole life of the Church. Religious education in the classrooms of Catholic schools has, on the other hand, a small but important part to play in catechesis.

In the paragraph on the proper character of religious instruction in schools, the GDC articulates a clear description of the relationship between catechesis and religious education that was not present in the 1972 directory. This distinction, as will be illustrated in the next section of this chapter, is present in some documents written by the Congregation for Catholic Education after the first directory and was taken up by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy in the new GDC.

The relationship between religious instruction in schools and catechesis is one of distinction and complementarity: 'there is an absolute necessity to distinguish clearly between religious instruction and catechesis' (par. 73). The reasons for the 'absolute necessity' to clearly distinguish the two are not given; however, the distinction is clearly stated:

It is necessary, therefore, that religious instruction in schools appears as a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines. It must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge (par. 73).

The articulation of the importance of the cognitive demands of religious education in schools and the need to present religious education with the same rigour as other subjects is a major advance on the first directory. The statement has drawn on documents produced by the Congregation for Catholic Education as well as the wealth of research into religious education that occurred in the period between the directories and which emphasised this aspect of religious education.

Documents from the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education

The *Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education* has authority for seminaries, universities and schools. The various documents that this Congregation has produced for schools need to be seen as complementary to, but distinct from, other sources already surveyed. They fit within the Church's documentary tradition but have a particular focus on formal Catholic education as it occurs in schools and universities. They are written with a combination of educational and catechetical language, a point referred to by Veverka (1996) in his examination of the *Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* and which applies to the other documents as well:

The literature of Catholic education emphasises a necessary and intrinsic relationship between religious formation and social, cultural and intellectual development. The language of catechesis reflects its biblical roots and pastoral orientation. The core principles of Catholic education reflect the systematic framework of neoscholastic philosophical sources (Veverka, 1996, p. 486).

The Catholic School (CS) – 1977

The first of the documents from this Congregation addresses the nature of a Catholic school, in language that draws upon GE. It devotes much attention to language that is used to describe the religious education process in schools. Drawing upon the concepts developed in EN this document recalls that:

...evangelisation is, therefore, the mission of the Church; that is, she must proclaim the good news of salvation to all, generate new creatures in Christ through Baptism, and train them to live knowingly as children of God (par. 7).

Schools are part of that mission of the Church, and as such can be places of evangelisation. Other sections of CS describe schools as places where the young are exposed to the world (par. 27), where they have the opportunity to develop ethical approaches to life (par. 30), and where values can be explored (par. 32). Teachers have a critical role in exposing faith dimensions to the young (par. 4).

The document explores the teaching of religious education, and presents a theory of religious education in schools which is not confined to religious education classes:

Without entering into the whole problem of teaching religion in schools it must be emphasised that, while such teaching is not merely confined to 'religious classes' within the school curriculum, it must, nevertheless, also be imparted explicitly and in a systematic manner to prevent a distortion in the child's mind between religious and other forms of education (par. 50).

CS differentiates religious education from catechesis and states 'that the proper place for catechesis is the family helped by other Christian communities, especially the local parish' (par. 51). However, CS articulates a connection between parish and schools similar to the GDC. Schools assist this primary catechesis when 'young people are helped to grow towards maturity of faith' (par. 51).

Absent from the document is any detailed reference to the formal religious education curricula, as it operates in schools. Limiting the discussion of religious education to the broad religious dimensions of school and not taking into account classroom religious education avoids the necessity of articulating a theory that seeks to balance religious education and catechesis. The document sets religious education within the broader catechetical perspective of the Church (Malone, 1992, p. 8) and does not expand on religious education as it occurs in classrooms in Catholic schools.

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (LCS) – 1982

One of the worldwide historical influences on the content of this document was the change from religious order dominance in Catholic schools to lay dominance, and the document commences with the recognition that lay Catholics in primary and secondary schools 'have become more and more vitally important in recent years' (par. 1). It is lay teachers, 'believers or not, who will substantially determine

whether or not a school realises its aims and accomplishes its objectives' (par. 1). The lay educators exercise a specific mission within the Church. They need to have the best possible professional qualifications and be inspired by faith (par. 24).

Explicit mention is made of a new description of an aspect of the role of the teacher, that of vocation. This is borrowed from the theology of religious life where women and men who responded to God's call were said to have a vocation, a calling. This language, once primarily associated with vowed women and men religious, has been transferred to include all teachers in Catholic schools: 'It is, therefore, very desirable that every lay Catholic educator become fully aware of the importance, the richness, and the responsibility of this vocation' (par. 37). Referring to the life of a teacher as a vocation, and stressing their role as witness, frames the teacher in church language, as opposed to their primary function as educators.

A critical insight that this document brings is the recognition that aspects of the teaching of religious education are not necessarily part of catechesis (Malone, 1992, p. 8). It commences by reiterating the principles in GE that religious education is actually a right of all people. LCS then clarifies the nature of religious instruction and its relationship to catechesis. It should not go unnoticed that this document represents a decisive turning point in the discussion about religious education and catechesis:

Therefore, the teaching of the Catholic religion, distinct from and at the same time complementary to catechesis, properly so called, ought to form a part of the curriculum of every school (par. 56).

This is the first time in any of the Roman documents that this distinction is made. What is meant by this complementarity, however, is not developed in LCS. It reflects the influence of the work of religious education theorists and researchers within the discipline of religious education who had been arguing since the early 1970s for this understanding of religious education in relation to schools.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (RDE) – 1988

The purpose of this document from the *Congregation for Catholic Education* was to provide guidelines for reflection and renewal for Catholic schools and those who work in them. The Congregation called on bishops and superiors of religious orders to reflect upon the impact of Vatican II. The title of the document indicates that this document examines much more than formalised religious education curriculum or religious instruction classes within schools. The 'religious dimension' is a much broader area and refers to all aspects of the life of the school; it includes all teachers, all subject areas, and all other elements intrinsic to the school curriculum.

In the development of the theory of religious education in schools RDE is the first document to provide a sustained and detailed proposal of an educational perspective, departing from the specifically catechetical perspective contained in many of the documents already analysed. It has significantly added to the theory developed in LCS. The term 'catechesis' as the preferred term for religious education, widely

used in CT, EN, GCD, GDC and CS, is rarely mentioned in RDE. In fact, the term is not used until part four of the five-part document (pars. 68–73). The purpose of the reference to catechesis at that point is to make a clear distinction between it and religious instruction:

There is a close connection, and at the same time a clear distinction, between religious instruction and catechesis, or the handing on of the Gospel message. The close connection makes it possible for a school to remain a school and still integrate culture with the message of Christianity. The distinction comes from the fact that, unlike religious instruction, catechesis presupposes that the hearer is receiving the Christian message as a salvific reality (par. 68).

RDE makes this distinction when it examines the aims and purposes of catechesis and education:

The aim of catechesis, or handing on the Gospel message, is maturity: spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic; this happens most especially in a local Church community. The aim of the school is knowledge. While it uses the same elements of the Gospel message, it tries to convey a sense of the nature of Christianity, and of how Christians are trying to live their lives. It is evident, of course, that religious instruction cannot help but strengthen the faith of a believing student, just as catechesis cannot help but increase one's knowledge of the Christian message (par. 69).

Moreover, the teacher, both professionally and personally, is cast as central to the effectiveness of this religious dimension (par. 96). More specifically, 'the effectiveness of religious instruction is closely tied to the personal witness given by the teacher' (par. 96). The 'witness' component of the teacher's role receives a prominent place within the document, as it does in other documents previously mentioned in this chapter. However, the prominence of the witness does not override the need to have suitably trained and qualified teachers: 'Everything possible must be done to ensure that Catholic schools have adequately trained religion teachers; it is a vital necessity and a legitimate expectation' (par. 97). In addition RDE expresses an understanding of the role of the school in relation to religious instruction. 'A Catholic school is not simply a place where lessons are taught; it is a centre that has an operative educational philosophy, attentive to the needs of today's youth and illumined by the Gospel message' (par. 22).

Schools deal primarily with students as they present themselves at school, but they also have a connection with what occurs in the lives of students outside the school. In RDE it is suggested that religious instruction needs to be linked with those areas of the students' lives that are outside the school: 'Finally, religious instruction in the school needs to be coordinated with the catechesis offered in parishes, in the family, and in youth associations' (par. 70). This is perhaps the clearest reference to the complementarity between religious education and catechesis, while at the same time highlighting their differences. Religious education occurs within the educational

settings of the classroom and utilises all the techniques and insights that educational theory and understandings of classroom practice permit. Catechesis occurs within the settings of families, parishes and voluntary associations where people gather for the purpose of the sharing of faith. Assumptions such as those implied in the catechetical approach cannot be easily applied to the religious education classroom in Catholic schools, yet they do support each other. Religious education leaves open and encourages the possibility of catechesis.

It is clear in this document that the realities of school life have been foundational to its articulation of theory in relation to religious education. The document recognises that the nature of schools has changed, that they are now more multi-cultural and pluralistic than ever before. There is also recognition that the nature of education itself has changed, and that religious education needs to draw upon those changes to be educationally valid. The mention of objectives, syllabus, links with other disciplines, promotion of culture, and use of best methodologies (par. 56) is a testimony to the ways in which this document is embedded in the world of school education and is attempting to address the needs of schools. Furthermore, 'this document is attempting to chart different territory from the catechetical documents' (Ryan, 1997, p. 174), focusing on the broad religious and educational dimensions of schooling.

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (CSTM) – 1998

CSTM is the most recent of the documents from the Congregation of Education. It is an exceptionally small document (twenty-one paragraphs) when compared with all the other documents that have so far been analysed in this chapter. The document uses the onset of the third millennium to restate, in summary fashion, the principles of the Catholic school in the light of 'new challenges which are the result of a new socio-political and cultural context' (par. 1). Among those challenges are 'extreme pluralism' (par. 1) and 'rapid structural changes, profound technical innovations and the globalisation of the economy' (par. 1). In the midst of these changes, CSTM urges Catholic schools to undergo a 'courageous renewal' (par. 3) because of their 'fundamental duty to evangelise' (par. 3). Schools are described as having two functions: 'The Catholic school should be able to offer young people the means to acquire the knowledge they need in order to find a place in society which is strongly characterised by technical and scientific skill. But at the same time, it should be able, above all, to impart a solid Christian formation' (par. 8).

CSTM points out that there have been important developments and insights gained in the science of education and other areas of knowledge, but society has not been as devoted to 'the essence of education as such, centred on deeply meaningful values and vision' (par. 10). The document reiterates the connection between Church and school, and describes schools as places 'of ecclesial experience' (par. 15). Teaching within such a context 'has an extraordinary moral depth' (par. 19) and the person of the teacher is very important.

Conclusion

The documents surveyed in this chapter represent a wealth of material for those involved in the mission of the Catholic Church, particularly in the formal ministries of catechesis and religious education. Nevertheless the documents need to be approached with a critical mindset, in particular a mindset that is aware of the authorship, context and purpose of the documents. This mindset will not remove all of the complexities of language and will not result in a universally obvious and accepted theory of religious education for Catholic schools. However, being aware of these complexities is a necessary first step to a sufficient commonality of meaning.

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FUNCTIONAL DEMOCRACY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE: A PARTICIPATIVE APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Dr. Graham English

Australian Catholic University, Strathfield, New South Wales

Introduction

There is a crisis of meaning in the Australian Catholic Church following the changes in the Church and Australian culture since the 1960s, and this crisis has an effect on religious education in Catholic secondary schools. There are many signs of this crisis of meaning but the most critical is the gap between the *institutional* aspect of the Church, the People of God gathered in Jesus' name, and the *organisational* part, the group of people who make the rules and see themselves as the leaders. This gap is particularly great between the organisation in Rome and the institution in Australia.

The problem is that there has been a change in the discourse of meaning in the Church, a profound ideological change, but the organisation and the institution have moved apart because they each have different theories about how understanding occurs. The organisation acts as if it believes that meaning can be reproduced and handed on unchanged. The People of God, those who are not officially part of the organisation, act as if meaning changes depending on the context.

The result is that the organisation and the institution have different ways of addressing the crisis of meaning, and different positions on how the crisis might be addressed. They have different hermeneutics. The organisation still relies on a conservative or reproductive hermeneutic that cannot adequately account for or deal with change, while the institution, the People of God, has *de facto* adopted a critical hermeneutic that can account for change and better cope with it. Many teachers, parents and students, without formulating or really understanding what they doing, have a significantly different way of interpreting their experience of life, and the Church, from those in the organisational Church.

This chapter is the beginning of a strategy for bringing the organisation closer to the institution, the ordinary People of God, by applying a suitable hermeneutic to religious education.

The Continuity of the People of God

One source of the crisis of meaning for Christian religious educators is the tension that arises from their need to address the religious needs of the students, and to help them find their individual calling, while at the same time seeking to maintain and develop the Catholic tradition. In the Catholic Church the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II, 1962–1966) proposed that an individual can have freedom within the believing community. This chapter proposes that both doctrine and individuals need to change if religious institutions are to continue over time. It focuses on John Dewey's (1916) approach to education via functional democracy, and John Henry Newman's (1845/1973) theory of the development of doctrine. It addresses the question: 'How does Dewey's functional democracy inform Vatican II's notion of individual freedom within the believing community?'

To have young people simply grow up physically and master the necessities of subsistence is not enough to ensure the continuity of the life of the group, because children are born unaware of, and indifferent to, the aims and habits of the group, and have to be both made aware of and actively interested in its life if it is to flourish (Dewey, 1916). To ensure continuity, enough of the young have to become willing members of the institution. Achieving this willing membership is one of the tasks of education (Dewey, 1916).

John Dewey defined learning as the solving of genuine problems in the biographical development of individuals, and the social development of the species (Dewey, 1916). Education is one way in which institutions and cultures solve the problem of continuity. This is as true of religious education as it is of all other education. A religious institution like the Catholic Church will continue only if its young are educated into a willing acceptance of its aims and the habits of the groups that constitute it. For Dewey, education is a process in which all members of the group, adults as well as children, learn all the time, thereby helping the group to survive and develop. Education for development precludes the possibility of mere rote learning; any community intent on flourishing needs an attitude to learning that celebrates the growing will of the student.

The Individual Vocation

One of the challenges in the biographical development of individuals arises from the question of how each is to live in the group according to who they are called to be. 'We live such a short time in this world, it seems a pity not to do the jobs we're suited for' (Powell, 1966). Catholicism sees this dilemma in terms of personal vocation, from the Latin *vocatus*, a summons or call. All Catholics, 'whatever their condition

or state, are called by the Lord, each in his own way to that perfect holiness whereby the Father Himself is perfect' (*Lumen Gentium*, 1965). Thomas Merton described a fellow Cistercian monk in this way: 'I know the integrity of this man is very costly to him. He suffers very much in order to be true to his own heart, that is to the heart God has given him, and which has in it a mysterious command that no one here is able to understand' (Merton, 1968). Newman's *Apologia pro vitae sua* (1869) is an account of his following his individual vocation. In a different mode he summed this up in a prayer that begins, 'God has created me to do him some definite service; he has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another' (Morneau, 1982). Newman became content that he was following his summons, but acknowledged in this prayer both that it is sometimes difficult to know what the summons is, and usually very difficult to follow it. So the prayer contains a line of ultimate trust, 'Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away'. Charlotte Beck's comment that transformation is 'to produce what life chooses to produce through us' is an acknowledgment that the task of being human is to live whom we are called to be (Beck, 1993). Her mingling of the concepts of vocation and transformation leads to the thought that education for transformation is education for vocation. The acceptance of the individual's vocation, that in the context of the community all persons are to follow the summons that they discern they are called to, is not some kind of wild individualism. It is openness to that which allows for the possibility of truth being found in unexpected places. And it is a way of keeping the balance between the continuity of the group and the freedom of each person within it.

Discerning the Summons

The call of the individual is only half of the story. Individuals exist only in communities, 'modes of associated living', that, if they are functional democracies, have authority through what Dewey labels 'conjoint communicated experience' (Dewey, 1916). This is part of the actual democracy that Dewey regards as a prerequisite for education. Here democracy is the commitment on the part of all to the ideal that, as far as possible, every individual is free to live a fully human life; that is, a life experienced as full of meaning and value (Garrison, 1995). Here Dewey is enunciating an approach to freedom that Pope John XXIII and Vatican II expressed much later, but it was not new in Catholic thought when they enunciated it, even if it was rarely practised. Writing in 1911, when the Catholic Church was still deeply fearful of the French Revolution and suspicious of the concept of functional democracy (Duffy, 1997), Belloc claimed that the political theory on which the revolution proceeded was universal. 'It is eternal, and it is true,' Belloc wrote, and added:

A political community pretending to sovereignty, that is, pretending to a moral right of defending its existence against all other communities, derives the civil and temporal authority of its laws not from its actual rulers, nor even from its magistracy, but from itself (Belloc, 1911).

The ideas of vocation and the moral right of communities to rule themselves lead to two commitments that together help avoid the traps of ideology and of self-delusion, of both theological imperialism and a post-modern disintegration of the unity of faith. The first is the commitment to disinterest on the part of all members of the community. The second is a commitment that the community will strive to hold in tension the beliefs that legitimacy lies first with the individual member of the institution (Saul, 1997), and second with the community or institution as a whole.

Both the individual's vocation and the community's need are part of the process of discernment. Disinterest calls on both individual and community to preclude that *ethnocentric* practicality 'in which the test of a good theory is whether it is developed in the interests of the group of which the theorist is a member' (Young, 1996). It calls us also to disdain that *egocentric* practicality in which the test of a good theory is whether it is developed in the interest of the developer. Disinterest is the opposite of ethnocentrism or egocentrism. If all members of the group are disinterested, that is, acting only for the well-being and continuity of the community, then each member of the group theorises, interprets and acts only in ways that promote the common good. In a sense they overcome plurality while at the same moment they honour it. It is part of what Dewey (1916) labels 'democracy', but it is a far cry from any form of mere majority rule and interest politics. This is *functional democracy* where disinterest tolerates, indeed welcomes, difference, provided it does not harm the common good. It acknowledges that a sign that the common good is truly being sought is that individuals are free to live out their vocation.

Disinterest can also make room for the members of the group to distinguish, for example, between acts and theories that are simple defiance or self-interest, and those that are part of the process of continued dialogue about the mismatch of teaching and experience. In Church terms, disinterest is a way to achieve true closure between the consciences of the People of God and the hierarchical authorities of the Church. As Merton was aware even a genuinely disinterested community cannot easily understand the 'mysterious command' (Merton, 1968) that God puts in some people's hearts or into the community. This ability to discern is necessary for both individuals and the community in an institution like the Catholic Church, which of its nature is given to teaching, and where the Pope and the bishops have a privileged place in decision making when they act as the interpretive authority. This leads to the kind of theory that can be the basis for real communication.

A Functional Democracy

Dewey chose functional democracy as the best milieu for education because it combines numerous and varied points of shared common interest in a society, with the recognition of mutual interests between participants. For Dewey democracy is, like the ideal speech situation of Habermas (in Young, 1996), an ideal that is useful for hopeful thinking. Democracy in Dewey's sense is a collective project that has

two particular features. The first is that there must be recognition of common ideals, and the second is that there must be a wide, flexible range of points of contact with other groups, enabling cooperation and communication (Garrison, 1995). The first liberates conduct and allows it to become participation. The other allows social action to be ready for change and to cope with change in a constructive manner (Garrison, 1995). In Dewey's democracy neither blind obedience nor rigid narrowness has a place.

A democracy accepts that change in social habits to meet new situations in a culture or institution is a good idea, and that this happens via individual participation (Dewey, 1916). Change is not only a good idea, but it is necessary for institutions to survive; not, however, by blending differences with one another, or by one group being submerged by another. Institutions that survive will change to the extent necessary for them to recognise differences, to acknowledge what is valid in different positions, to become tolerant of some degree of diversity and to discover some common ground which becomes the place of conversation, where understanding and cooperation can be built (Young, 1996).

This conversation has to take place in continuity with the classics, with the symbols, revelation and stories that gave them meaning in the first place. Any theory of hermeneutics to be of use in a Catholic context has to be preservative of old meanings as well as creative of the new (*Fides et ratio*, 1998). In other words, theories of use have to be those that will allow for and explain the development of old meanings into new ideas. John Henry Newman introduced this idea into Catholic thought in his *Essay on the development of doctrine* (1845).

Preserving the Old Meanings

The development of an idea, Newman says, is 'nothing else than its adequate representation and its fulfilment, in its various aspects, relations, and consequences' (Newman, 1845). In the process of establishing that development is possible in doctrine, Newman asked the question as to whether a particular representation of an idea was a corruption or a development. A corruption 'obscures or prejudices its essential idea' and 'disturbs the laws of development', or it 'reverses its course of development'. That is not corrupt which is 'both a chronic and an active state' or which is 'capable of holding together the component parts of the system'. The same question arises here: What must we demand of new expressions of Catholic ideas or new theories for explaining Catholic religious education before we can accept them as adequate expressions and fulfilment?

Preserving the Idea

Newman listed seven tests of a true development of doctrine. The first test is *Preservation of Idea*. This is a difficult test to apply to particular cases because it implies an insight into the essential idea in which a system of thought is set up,

and when this test is attempted it leads only to more theorising. Indirectly this is a warning that in Catholicism it is not possible to get everything clear. Catholicism is particularly unsystematic in its inspired documents and in the all but silence of the contemporary history of its foundation. There are many things about the essential ideas and the foundation of Christianity that are going to remain forever unclear and therefore they will be in need of interpretation.

This uncertainty makes for difficulties for Catholic interpreters, but it also provides the milieu in which institutional learning can take place. Newman shows that the nature of Catholicism is such that it has the capacity to learn as an institution. This is important because Catholic schools, like the whole institution of the Church, are part of the process of institutional learning. Schools play a part in the process of identity formation of Catholics, for example, and so have a role to play in the Church's learning, just as they themselves learn to be part of the expanding moral-political discourse of the Church.

Continuity of Principles

The second test is *Continuity of Principles*. The political principles of Christianity are laid out in the Sermon on the Mount, for example. 'Contrariwise to other empires Christians conquer by yielding; they gain influence by hating it; they possess the earth by renouncing it' (Newman, 1845). Principles are different from doctrines in that principles are abstract and doctrines relate to facts; doctrines develop while principles do not; doctrines grow and are enlarged while principles are illustrated. Principles do not develop; they are exemplified.

Doctrines are intellectual while principles are more immediately ethical and practical. For example, personal responsibility is a principle, while the *Being of God* is a doctrine. However, what is a principle and what is a doctrine depends as much on how we view them as anything else, so that what is a principle in one religion may be a doctrine in another. A development of doctrine, to be faithful, must retain both the doctrine and the principle with which it started. Principle, therefore, is a better test of heresy than doctrine. If people have the same principles, even if they have different doctrines, neither is a heretic, even if one is ignorant.

The Power of Assimilation

Some ideas more readily coalesce with certain others, and this is a sign that they have an antecedent affinity with them (Newman, 1845). This is Newman's third test which he calls *Power of Assimilation*. It is the sign of a great idea that it can become many while remaining one. While entertaining one aspect of an idea we always move in the aura of its possible meanings. Great ideas, Newman says, have an 'eclectic, conservative, assimilating, healing, moulding process' (1845) that he labels a unitive power. This power to develop is a proof of life in the idea. The stronger and more living an idea, the more powerful a hold it exercises on the minds

of people, and the more it can dispense with safeguards and trust itself against the danger of corruption. When an idea is living and influential and operative in the minds of its recipients it is sure to develop according to the principles on which it was formed.

Here Newman is exhibiting what Paul Ricoeur (1989) means when he speaks of imagination. Ricoeur talks of the hermeneutic act being one of sympathetically re-imagining the cosmic images of our foundational myths (Kemp & Rasmussen, 1989). Newman speaks of ideas, 'the great idea' in this case, where Ricoeur would insist that the cosmic myths, the object of our reflection and intuition, and so of our development, are symbols. Newman, like Ricoeur, has profound trust in the great ideas or myths of Christianity, and an awareness that over time they will look after themselves. In the end truth will out, but will never be complete. He continues with the observation that developments are usually only aspects of the idea from which they come, and it is often a matter of accident in what order they are carried out in individual minds. Some of these developments occur early but are not found until later, and then we realise that they are part of the original idea. They have been an intimation of things to come.

Early Anticipation

An example of early anticipation is the idea of human flight appearing in the human imagination hundreds of years before the technology that made it possible. In the light of the development of the internal combustion engine and other technologies, something which was once thought impossible or even evil, and the province of witches, becomes familiar and is regarded as good. Newman's fourth test is *Early Anticipation* (Newman, 1845), which means faithfulness to an ultimate development. At the time an early anticipation might be judged by some to be unfaithful, which is one good reason for authorities to be tentative in their denouncements, and why trust in the Holy Spirit is of the essential nature of discernment. This trust is expressed well in Chesterton's dictum, 'refuse to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about' (1907).

A Logical Sequence

It does not matter in what order or degree of development the elements of an idea show themselves, but when they are all seen together it will be observed that there has been an orderly and gradual sequence. This is Newman's fifth test, *Logical Sequence*. He is not claiming that there is a conscious move from premise to conclusion; in fact he excludes this possibility arguing that it is more a discursive exploration. Newman is saying that ideas grow in the mind by remaining there, becoming familiar and distinct, and by linking with related ideas and gradually developing into a body of thought, without the thinker even recognising what is happening. Pre-understanding is a prelude to further understanding. This is as

important for religious educators as it is for the whole institutional Church, because we do not always know what stage of understanding we are in. We often have to take a risk that we will come to understanding. Just as an idea can gradually grow in the mind of an individual, so analogous development is a social project, not just the work of the individual. The whole institution participates in the act of inquiry at the present level of learning in the society, not always recognising what is happening, and with the potential to transcend that level (Young, 1998).

The trust that is necessary to such a process will eventually carry the organisation closer to the institution and bridge the gap of alienation. When Newman is discussing how ideas grow he is preparing the way for an explanation of how the Catholic institution joins in the hermeneutic tradition. Newman's ideas have to be expressed and acted upon at the level of learning communities, in a process of communicative action, if they are to be effective. This is why Newman's thought on development has implications for communication. He is, like Habermas later (in Young, 1996), providing a normative and a rational basis for social critique and for the development of meaning. His theory for the development of doctrine works only in a functional democracy. He is also illustrating the process of a theory based in hope that refuses to foreclose on the future.

It is surprising that, with Newman as part of their tradition, some of those fathers who prepared the first drafts of documents for the Second Vatican Council could think, for example, that the last word had been said on a Catholic approach to freedom at the end of the nineteenth century, and that this could be imposed on the faithful. It is even more surprising that any Catholic could think it now!

As part of this fifth test Newman notes that development always extends belief. Rationalism, on the other hand, contracts it. He observes that the spontaneous process that goes on within the mind itself is 'higher and choicer' than that which is logical. He summarises this test in the scriptural quote, 'By their fruits you shall know them' (1845).

Preservative Additions

Newman calls his sixth test *Preservative Additions*. Developments that are preceded by definite indications are quite likely to be acceptable, but those that contradict or reverse the course of doctrine are certainly corrupt. A corruption is a development in that very stage in which it ceases to illustrate, and begins to prejudice the acquisitions gained in its previous history. Hans-Georg Gadamer (1989) might have described this in terms of a development that, rather than fusing the horizons, snaps them apart. A true development is one that is conservative of the course of development that went on before, which is a development and something besides. Development adds an *and* to an idea, not a *but*.

Here again Newman is hopeful, refusing to foreclose on the future. He is here addressing the problem of the relationship between innovation and tradition that is the whole point of his essay. For him these preservative additions illustrate, not obscure; they corroborate, not correct, the body of thought from which they proceed.

They act as imagination does for Ricoeur (in White, 1986) in that they recollect and reiterate types across discontinuous episodes while they project new horizons of possibility. This is an example of creation-as-discovery. Changing from a false to a true religion is an example of a preservative tradition, Newman suggests. He argues that such a change consists chiefly in addition and increase, not in destruction. It creates the new out of the old, because true religion is the summit and perfection of false religions.

Chronic Continuance

The last test Newman labels *Chronic Continuance*. The corruption of an idea is a sort of accident or affection of its development. It is the end of a course and is the transition-state leading to a crisis. According to Newman, once corruption sets in the course downwards is always short. This is how corruption is distinguished from decay, because corruption's energetic action explains its quick and transitory character. Corruption, of its nature, cannot be long standing. Thus *duration* is another test of faithful development.

A Presumption of Change

The most obvious presumption in Newman's seven tests of the right development of doctrine is that, taken together, they presume considerable ongoing change in the Church.

They also presume a great amount of time being available for the process of discerning what is corrupt and what is not. *Newman's tests preclude any rush to judgement*. The task for all Catholics is to decide gradually, in the light of the long history of the Church, and in dialogue with the present and the future, what change is decay, what corruption, and what is faithful, and therefore life giving for the institution.

Catholics have to keep in mind that good interpretation and right discernment are both faithful to the original message, while at the same time they constitute an original work. In setting out the seven tests for knowing whether or not a development is corrupt, Newman provides guidelines for a functional process of participation in the development of doctrine at the level of learning communities, but he does not tell us how to use them. He does, however, point towards a way.

True Meaning Occurs only in Context

The way Newman points to is to apply his tests communicatively (Dunne, 1993). As Joseph Dunne notes, the form of reasoning by which Newman describes the grounds for clarifying religious belief is essentially similar to that which can be shown to operate in other areas of knowledge (Dunne, 1993). To form a theory of development

of doctrine in schools that leads to meaning making in the present context, the answer is to use a critical-moderate hermeneutical approach (Dunne, 1993).

Newman, whose essay employs a moderate or a critical-moderate hermeneutic, has made essential to his tests the desire *to embed the Church's message in the world in an appropriate way*. That is, the task is to engage with culture. This is Newman's accomplishment; he has realised the embedded nature of the Church's message that cannot be separated out from life. For Newman, Church and world are, inevitably, part of each other's context. This recognition of contextuality is what renders his hermeneutic moderate or moderately critical. While maintaining continuity with tradition he sees the need for transformation if the tradition is to survive. Via a theory of development of doctrine he is able to bridge the gap between being faithful to the tradition and being original, and in this he is like Aquinas (1227–1274) (MacIntyre, 1988). He is able to be critical of the tradition while being moderate in his originality. In other words he implicitly espouses a moderate-critical hermeneutic.

Continuity Through Participation

Dewey chose functional democracy as the best milieu for education. He did not mean majority rule, however, when he spoke of democracy; he meant consensus through communicative action (Dewey, 1916). He meant a political state of engaged dialogue leading to a consensus, or at least a mutual accommodation. To attain accommodation he hoped for a conscience vote on each issue, in which all voters would vote against their own material interests if that led to consensus or near consensus in a way that was for the common good. In Dewey's kind of democracy, individuals can vote against their own material interests, because they know that, in cases where they oppose, their opposition is taken seriously because it is considered to be morally serious, mature, competent, and validly grounded in someone's experience. The function of open participation was what Dewey had in mind. For him education is adaptive meaning making. It is the creation of new meaning out of former meaning, and present experience, and the reconstruction of prior habits into new ones. To have these we need institutionalisation of discourse, and democracy is the best form of institutionalisation (Dewey, 1916).

All Catholics are Involved

Newman does not speak of democracy in the Church, though he went to some pains to show that in matters of doctrine the laity are consulted; indeed that it has on occasion been the People of God who have led the hierarchy in maintaining continuity of faith and practice. This is very close to Dewey's position. Of course, when it comes to the last word on defining doctrine, the Pope is the final authority, though he does not have the last word for there is no last word. The final say is final *for now*. We are all parts of the institution of learning because the Church is

a learning society. It is clear in Newman's tests for the development or corruption of ideas that he presumes the Church is a society that combines numerous and varied points of shared common interest. It is an institution. This recognition of mutual interests among participants is what will lead eventually to corruption being eradicated and development being embraced. Newman is describing a Church that by its nature fulfils Dewey's first pre-requisite for democratic culture, in that there is recognition of common ideals.

Newman also accepts that change in the Church to meet new situations is good, and that it is arrived at through long discussion; indeed, it takes into account the discussion of the centuries. Here it comes close to meeting Dewey's second pre-requisite, that of having a wide, flexible range of points of contact with other groups, enabling cooperation and communication. In this case, as Newman shows, the 'other groups' (1845) extend over time as well as place.

Change is not only a good idea, it is necessary for the Church to survive. It must change to the extent necessary for it to recognise differences, to acknowledge what is valid in other cultures, to become tolerant of some degree of cultural diversity. It will be influenced by different theories as well as by different practice, and those ideas that have true development at their heart will, of their nature, take hold of the minds and hearts of the people.

Newman claims that if Catholicism is a universal religion suited not only to one period of history or to one locality, it has to vary in its relations and dealings with the world around it. That is, it must develop (Newman, 1845). His view on political action around change is expressed obliquely: 'If the Catholic hypothesis is true, it neither needs nor is benefited by unfairness' (Newman, 1845, p. 225), and his parameters for discussion are drawn wide: 'No doctrine is defined until it is violated' (Newman, 1845, p. 209). That they have not been violated is the reason so many doctrines of the Catholic Church have not needed to be defined.

Newman did not discuss democracy as a way of developing doctrine, and certainly he would not have considered it if it meant 'majority rules', though in expounding '*securus judicat orbis terrarum*, what everyone everywhere has always held' (Newman, 1995) he was embracing a broad Church. In the long run, though, he argues for the authority of fixed principles. There is a deposit of faith, what Newman calls in one place 'the credenda of Christendom' (Trevor, 1974) and there has to be an organisational way of making decisions. In adhering to its own principles the Church 'has been able to incorporate doctrine which was external to it without losing its own' (Newman, 1845, p. 352).

Newman was aware that there are times when the interpretive authority of the organisation has to be called on. He was a strong believer in the ultimate authority of the Pope, as he showed in 1870 when infallibility was declared a doctrine at the first Vatican Council, though he did not support all the political manoeuvres that led to the declaration, nor was he happy with the timing (Trevor, 1974). However, he was on the side of time being spent, and people included. He was against what he called 'reckless, tyrannical and heartless ecclesiastics' and in a letter to a friend

at this time, a period when steam trains were the fastest mode of transport, he summed up his position:

We do not move at railroad pace in theological matters even in the nineteenth century. We must be patient and that for two reasons, first in order to get at the truth, and next in order to carry others with us. The Church moves as a whole; it is not a mere philosophy; it is a communion; it not only discovers but it teaches; it is bound to consult for charity as well as for faith (Trevor, 1974, p. 241).

On the whole Newman, despite the 'heartless ecclesiastics', is hopeful both of the hierarchy of the Church as the interpretive authority, and of the People of God as consultants in the development of doctrine. That is, he opts for a process of communicative action. His whole essay on development, his whole life in fact, displays an awareness of the complexity of change and decision making in Catholicism.

Conclusion

Religious education is part of the process of communicative action that is necessary to the development of Catholic tradition. Catholic schools, being part of the People of God, are involved in this communicative action and so are places where doctrine develops. The explication of this claim is the task of further chapters, but the process of communicative action has many ways of beginning. One of these is the dialogue between the work of Newman and Dewey that this chapter begins. It is just one more example of the desire to preserve the tradition in the only way true preservation is possible; that is, by constant interpretation.

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THE ESSENCE OF EDUCATION IS RELIGIOUS

Anne Hunt

Australian Catholic University

Introduction

It was the late British mathematician and philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead (1962, p. 23), who expressed the remarkable and oft-quoted insight: 'The essence of education is that it be religious.' It is this somewhat startling insight which prompts this philosophical and theological reflection on the nature of education as inherently religious. There is no doubting that education—be it in regard to pre-school, school, or post-compulsory education—is a topic of great interest in the public domain, as is so evident in the frequent discussion of issues pertaining to education in the public press. Discussion of various social problems, be they road safety or obesity or dysfunctional relationships, is almost always accompanied by a call for better education, usually at school level, to address the problem. It would seem that no one lacks an opinion on what education should address and achieve. But in the current context of the separation of the public from the private domains of life, and the relegation of the religious to the private domain that is so strong a feature of contemporary Western postmodern life and culture, it may seem somewhat odd to speak of the essence of education as *religious*! Yet, that is indeed the exploration that I want to pursue in this chapter: that the essence of education is religious. Note that I am not saying that the essence of *religious* education is that it be religious, but that the essence of education, understood in its broadest and indeed its deepest sense, is religious. In choosing Whitehead's engaging expression, let me also state clearly that I do not intend to chart the development of his thought, to critique his work, or even to evaluate his contribution.

Prompted by Whitehead's words, what I explore in this chapter is the notion of the essence of education as religious. So much of the contemporary discussion of teaching and learning in the education sector—primary, secondary and tertiary, as well as in the professional and vocational training area—is expressed in terms of measurable outcomes, graduate attributes, and bench-marking indicators. But I suggest that to limit one's understanding of the educational endeavour to measurable

outcomes represents a serious reduction and attenuation of what is involved. Our endeavours in education radically transcend such a limited horizon. I contend that education is indeed an inherently religious exercise, more even than an inherently spiritual exercise, though the spiritual dimension is undoubtedly an element of the process. (See Carrette & King, 2005.) Hence, my aim is to explore and tease out the meaning of education as a distinctly religious endeavour, even if that religious character remains implicit and unthematized (i.e., not expressly recognised or articulated or acknowledged).

To be Religious?

This exploration clearly hangs on an understanding of the meaning of religious. What do we mean when we say that the essence of education is that it be—not political or social or cultural or even values-based, but—*religious*? Cremin (1976, p. 27) defines education as ‘the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities, as well as any outcomes of that effort.’ Others speak of education in more general terms, such as the historian Bailyn (1960, p. 14), who describes education as ‘the entire process by which culture transmits itself across the generations.’ Moreover, to speak of the very essence of education as *religious* is to say that all other aspects of the educational endeavour are secondary to, and subsumed under, its distinctly religious aspect.

By the term ‘religious’ we obviously do not refer to what might be termed an institutional religiosity, in other words, a particular confession of religious faith, which may or may not be associated or identified with a particular religious community. Rather, we refer at this stage of our exploration to a sense of the sacred that is not necessarily confined to any particular institutional form or expression of religious faith. Nor does our description of the essence of education as religious refer to the processes of education *per se* (although the process is not peripheral to our educational endeavours and concerns). We refer to the ultimate ends and horizon of education, and indeed we refer to the ultimate horizon of the human person *qua* human and to the human person *qua* religious, in essence. We do not speak, for example, of an educated dog, though we may take our dogs to dog school for disciplinary training and socialisation. Rather, we speak of a well-trained dog. Indeed at times we speak of children or workers as well-trained, meaning that they are disciplined and informed in regard to the skills, competencies, technicalities, activities and operations that are required of them. When we speak of a well-educated person, on the other hand, our language presses beyond the notion of being well-disciplined, beyond being merely well-informed and even knowledgeable. We intend so much more than a purely instrumental or utilitarian approach to learning. We think of a well-educated person as being cultured and refined (to use words that may seem somewhat old-fashioned and which are nevertheless in close accord with Bailyn’s description above of education as the process of cultural transmission), with a breadth and depth of knowledge and, indeed, with that certain wisdom

which permeates the person's whole life and way of being in the world. We also expect something more of a well-educated person. There is an element of shock and dismay when, for example, we hear of someone who is considered to be well-educated as being involved in unsavoury or criminal activity. Well-educated, in common parlance, connotes a certain dignity, respect and privilege, and it implies and presumes a certain correlative responsibility and magnanimity. We do indeed expect something more of the well-educated person, a certain wisdom and nobility, call it grace, a living in the appreciation of a gift.

The Dynamism of Human Personhood

The ancient Greeks recognised the human capacity for rational thought as the distinctive characteristic of a human being. The classical philosophical tradition thus speaks of the human person as a rational animal. The notion of person was in fact discovered and hammered out in early trinitarian and christological controversies! The Christian philosopher Boethius, in the sixth century, described the human person as an individual substance of a rational nature. It was not a bad definition, even if it stepped back from the intrinsic relationality of earlier theological notions. How remarkable and how precious indeed is this capacity for rationality, that finds unique expression in the human person, and which indeed comes to self-consciousness in the human person. For not only are human persons rational beings, capable of critical reflection, we are also capable of conscious and critical reflection on ourselves as thinking reasoning beings, even though, admittedly, that consciousness of ourselves as intentional subjects regularly goes unthematized, unacknowledged, unreflected upon and unanalysed. While modern science has presented us with evidence of the remarkable communication skills in the animal world, of dolphins, for example, no other animal compares to the human animal in terms of the capacity for critical thought, for creativity and imagination. Think, for example, of Pythagorus' Theorem, Einstein's Theory of Relativity, the Theory of Chaos, the landing on the Moon, all of which, together with so much more (for example, Giotto's paintings, Leonardo da Vinci's drawings, Mozart's symphonies, Bernini's angels), stand as testimony to the remarkable capacity of the human mind, a capacity that is unsurpassed in the animal world. In a sense, the human spirit is indeed *quodammodo omnia*, somehow open to all things; it is, in this sense, all things, since it can know all things.

Moreover, the human spirit manifests itself not just as the *capacity* to know, to reason, to understand, to conceptualise, theorise and rationalise in particular areas, but in the *drive* to know and to understand, transcending any limited attainment. A more probing definition of the human person might well express the uniqueness of human personhood in terms, not of capacity to know, but of *desire*, the desire to know, to love, to be. This desire to know knows no limits; the desire for the good accepts no limitations; the desire to be and to reach fulfillment similarly reaches beyond each and every limiting judgment pronounced by others. Each question we ask prompts new questions. The English theologian Sebastian Moore OSB

in fact proposes that the human person may be defined in terms of desire. The religious significance and dynamic finality of desire is central in his anthropology and theology. Indeed, we could describe Sebastian Moore's work in terms of a theology of desire. (See, for example, Moore's *Jesus: The Liberator of Desire*, 1989.) It is the desire to know that is the source of every particular question, every insight, every judgment; and each new insight and each new judgment prompts ever-new questions, insights, and judgments, prompting further reaches into the unknown. Never satisfied, ever restless, this desire to know is limitless in its desire to know all that there is to know. Its ultimate quest is what is ultimately true. It seeks the truth that grounds all truth.

Karl Rahner SJ, one of the greatest systematic and pastoral theologians of twentieth century Catholic theology, takes up this understanding of the human person as knower. (See, for example, Rahner, 1987.) He recognises that our sense of our own finitude is in fact grasped against a sense of an infinite horizon; in other words, it is only against a background of the infinite that we grasp the finite. In this way Rahner focuses on our implicit awareness as human beings of, and indeed openness to, infinity. Rahner thus defines the human person or human spirit as openness to the infinite. This openness to the infinite finds expression in the dynamism of human transcendence, whereby our spirit quests ever onward and forward and beyond, never satisfied with what we know and glimpse here and now, reaching ever outward, toward the infinite, in eager anticipation of its fulfilment. Nothing less than the infinite will satisfy us. It is as if our questions, our insights and judgements are anticipations and presentiments—promises indeed—of that ultimate fulfilment.

Rahner argues that the human person, precisely as knower, lover and doer, cannot fail to raise the question of being. He would persuade us that the question of being is the question implicit in every question we ask. Our ultimate question, our primordial concern, even if implicitly and not explicitly expressed, is about being. In the question of this or that particular finite being is implied the question of infinite being. In this sense, the human person has an implicit, pre-conceptual, pre-grasp of infinite being, of infinite existence, of the ultimate horizon of all our knowing. Rahner thus describes the human person not as a rational animal, but as embodied spirit, an historical spatio-temporal being whose spiritual dynamism is consciously, although implicitly, directed toward Infinite Being (God), who is its horizon. As Rahner explains:

Can you realise that all human beings, whether they are aware of it or are quite unable to tell it to themselves, possess an innermost ultimate dynamism of their spiritual existence? Can you realise that human beings, when they act, when they love, when they think correctly, when they search, when they inquire, when they act freely and responsibly, are ultimately intending the ineffable, unfathomable mystery that we call God? (Rahner, 1986, p. 76).

Our restless quest for ever more knowledge and understanding attests to our quest for the infinite. Nothing less will satisfy us. No one less than the One who is Infinite

Being will satisfy our yearnings. For many reasons, however, our grasp of the One who is Infinite Being may remain unthematized, unnamed, not recognised in any explicit way.

While classical philosophical approaches to a definition of human being focused on the human capacity to know and to reason, and so stressed the human person as *rational*, more modern approaches urge us to move beyond a focus on the capacity for rationality to an appreciation of the profoundly *relational* nature of authentic human existence. The environmental crisis, the ecological movement, and indeed developments in scientific understanding have prompted a profound appreciation of the interrelatedness of all creation in an all-creative field of life and being. (It is the sense that Seamus Heaney [1996, p. 20] captures when, in the poem *St Kevin and the Blackbird* he speaks of finding oneself 'linked into the network of eternal life.') This perspective privileges an understanding that, as human persons, we live and have our being not in solitary splendour, in isolation from all else, but in an intensely relational involvement with the all, the whole and the ultimate.

This new-found focus on relationality reflects much more than a mere change of perspective, a newly developed focus, a change of attitude on our part. It has a real foundation, namely our common participation in creation, for our very being and all created being participates in the one mystery of the cosmos, the one mystery of being. Our capacity for rational thought and our unceasing quest to probe ever further and ever deeper the intelligibility of the universe, is thus situated in the larger context of our connectedness, not only to each other, as human persons, but also to all life and indeed to the entire cosmos, animate and inanimate, past, present and future. We are literally made from stardust. In the very atoms that constitute the cells in our bodies, we are materially and physically connected and related to all creation.

Our sense of connectedness and interdependency finds its ultimate expression in loving care for the other, in love for all others, in concern for the common wealth of all peoples and for the common good of all creation, and, indeed, in love for the One who created it. In this way, our quest to know all that there is to know leads us ever deeper into the mystery of all that is, and to a love for all that is. Here too the human person manifests not just the capacity for love and for the good, but a *desire* for the good, which, like the desire for truth, is limitless in its quest, ever pressing beyond any particular good in its quest for the unlimited good, in anticipation of the good that grounds all goodness, the infinite good that we sense, even if but implicitly, in every particular good.

The (recently) much-maligned Augustine, in the fifth century, captured this sense of the nature of the human person in his exploration of the human person as knowing and willing, as understanding and loving. Indeed it was Augustine who first recognised the very image of the trinitarian God in the human operations of remembering, understanding and loving, an analogy of perennial value in Christian faith's effort to reach some understanding of the mystery of God's triune being. For Augustine, the human mind's operations of remembering, understanding

and loving reflected the triune image of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As Augustine explains:

I do not say that these things are to be equated, even by analogy, with the Holy Trinity, that is to say are to be arranged according to some exact rule of comparison. This I do not say. But what do I say? See, I have discovered in you three things which we see as exhibited separately but whose operation is inseparable (Augustine, Sermon 52, x, 23. Ulanov, 1983, p. 127).

Thomas Aquinas, in the thirteenth century, recast Augustine's profoundly experiential reflections on the operations of knowing and loving in the human person in terms of the more refined framework of Aristotelian philosophy then available to him. In Aquinas' hands, an understanding of the human person emerged in terms of the human faculties of intellect (understanding) and will (love). Admittedly, this understanding of the human person, so richly portrayed by Augustine and so elegantly refined by Aquinas, was later to suffer, in the hands of less adept interpreters and in the drastically attenuated summaries in the standard Scholastic theological manuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, what we might call an intellectualist distortion, wherein the intellect and its capacity for understanding was given such priority over that of the will and its capacity for love that the latter was effectively obscured from consideration.

This intellectualist distortion had its source in the medieval adage, based on the human experience, that that which is loved is first known. After all, in our normal limited human experience, we cannot love what we do not first know. In our finitude, it is normally that case that we must first know something or someone before we come to love it or him or her. It was this aspect of our human experience, that that which is loved is first known, that served to justify the priority of knowledge over love. And yet, it is also true to our experience of love that, in a very real sense, that which is known is not actually fully and really known *until* it is loved. We know more fully what we truly love. The experience of the mystics also gives us a glimpse of a love that does not rely so directly or immediately on knowledge. It is that kind of knowledge to which Blaise Pascal (1952, IV, 272, on p. 222) famously refers when he writes: 'the heart has its reasons which reason does not know.'

The modern tendency, on the other hand, is to distort the image of the human person in the opposite direction, in what we might call a voluntarist direction, which eschews responsibility for the collective task of judgements of value, thus leaving those judgements dangerously subject to the arbitrariness of individual assessment and personal whim. We opt out of the hard work of analysis and judgment, preferring to agree to disagree! The result, as Alasdair MacIntyre (1984, 1988, 1991) has observed, is a world of moral discourse that is characterised by interminable debates on questions of value and morality. The reluctance to make judgements of value that is a consequence of this kind of voluntarist distortion effectively leaves the discourse bereft of a rational way of assessing competing moral claims.

So, while classical philosophy described the human person in terms of rationality, Augustine, and Aquinas following him, recognised that the human person

is characterised by the operations of knowing and willing, the faculties of understanding and loving, what we in more modern terms might express in terms of rationality and relationality. Their insight is still valid, I would argue. Who of us would not claim both notions of rationality and relationality as capturing that which distinguishes ourselves *qua* human beings. Are not our endeavours and our commitments, at our best, characterised by rationality—in terms of our disinterested quest for what is true—and by relationality—in terms of our quest for the good, for the common good and the common wealth? Are we not seekers of the true and good? Indeed, is that not what we seek to articulate when we speak of a person as authentic and his or her efforts genuine? Admittedly, Augustine and Aquinas express their understanding of the human person in language and conceptuality that is foreign to modern ears. Here we can turn to Bernard Lonergan SJ (1957, 1972) who refashions their insight into the nature of the human person in terms that are more accessible and amenable to modern thought.

Human Intentionality and the Dynamics of Self Transcendence

In Lonergan's hands, the Augustinian–Thomistic image of the human person and the human capacity for understanding and love is transposed in terms of the language of human subjectivity and the dynamism of human intentionality. (By intentionality, we mean our own reality insofar as we are conscious self-transcending subjects of experience and intention.) Lonergan thus shifts the emphasis away from the classical tradition which treated the human being as a metaphysical substance distinguished from other living beings by psychological attributes and powers, to an analysis of the human being as psychological subject: finite, factual, historically situated, conscious and intentional.

Seeking to identify the fundamental dynamism of our questioning, thinking, judging, in our restless quest for the good, the true, the beautiful (and indeed the holy), Lonergan, in an analysis of human intersubjective intentionality, teases out the dynamics at play in the unrestricted desire of human intelligence to know being, that process of self-transcendence that drives us forward to ever new questions and new insights. His concern is an analysis of the dynamism of intentionality which lies behind all our cognitional activity, even if, as is so often the case, that dynamism remains unacknowledged and unthematized, as such, in the human subject who instantiates it.

Lonergan recognises that our conscious activity is structurally organised according to the categories of attention, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility. These categories of conscious intentional activity, he maintains, lie at the very centre of who we are as human persons, even if generally unacknowledged. They constitute a dynamic pattern of recurrent and related operations in which the desire to know unfolds, with the unrestricted desire to know driving and indeed uniting the cognitional operations.

Lonergan then articulates what he describes as the transcendental precepts, the perduring trans-cultural trans-historical operational precepts that underlie, shape and

drive our distinctly human way of being in the world: Be attentive; be reasonable; be intelligent; be responsible (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 20, 53, 231, 302). The precepts, he argues, describe the distinct imperatives that drive the human subject toward self-transcendence and authenticity.

- Firstly, be attentive to the data of experience, the empirical data of consciousness.
- Secondly, be intelligent in one's inquiry into the meaning of the data of experience, and in one's effort to understand the data.
- Thirdly, be reasonable in one's critical reflection, assessment and judgment as to the accuracy and reasonableness of one's judgments of fact and of value.
- Fourthly, be responsible in one's deliberations, decisions and commitments, based on those judgments of fact and of value.
- Fifthly, Lonergan adds, 'be in love,' i.e., act out of love for the human world, the whole world, and ultimately with the mystery that grounds everything that is.

Lonergan thus recognises that human knowing emerges from a dynamic structured recurrent pattern of intentional operations. He goes further and gives the name 'transcendental method' to this pattern of operations that begins in experience, proceeds to the level of understanding and conception, and terminates in judgment. The central thesis of Lonergan's cognitional theory is that every successful enactment of inquiry follows this transcendental method, this normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding progressive and cumulative results. Driving the process is the impetus of intellectual desire, the unrestricted desire to know which, by its very nature, consciously, intentionally, intelligently, and rationally transcends the limits of the inquiring subject. It drives the human subject successively from one level of intentional content to another; from data to intelligibility, from intelligibility to truth, from truth to being, and from being toward the whole of what exists. Finally, Lonergan (1972, p. 265) would have us grasp the uncanny paradox: that truth itself is the fruit of genuine subjectivity, for, as Lonergan explains, 'objectivity is simply the consequence of authentic subjectivity, of genuine attention, genuine intelligence, genuine reasonableness, genuine responsibility.'

Education as the Cultivation of the Dynamism of Self Transcendence

While Lonergan's language may also have a somewhat foreign ring about it to those unfamiliar with his thought and work, is it not so that these precepts—particularly the first four: be attentive; be reasonable; be intelligent; be responsible—effectively describe the fundamental characteristics of our experience of critical reflection and indeed of research methodology, as we know it at its best? Does not our work in research, for example, emerge from a fundamental dynamism of questioning, attending, thinking, judging, and, more deeply, the dynamism of an unrestricted desire to know, that drives us forward to ever new questions? Our learning, our teaching, our study, our research flows from our desire to know which, by its

very nature, consciously, intelligently, rationally, and responsibly drives the human subject successively from empirical data to intelligibility, from intelligibility to truth, and ultimately from truth to being, and from being toward the whole of what exists.

Similarly, are these precepts—including even the fifth ‘be in love’—not also the very kinds of operations, indeed the method, to which we refer, in modern business or organisational terminology, when we speak of best practice? By best practice we mean practice that is sound and reliable, effective and efficient, ethical and responsible, practice that is to be emulated, practice that is genuinely praiseworthy and good; in other words, authentic practice? The language of best practice, like the language of research, refers to the very same surrender to the demands of the human spirit which we have just described as constitutive of authentic personhood: be attentive; be intelligent; be reasonable; be responsible; even be in love (albeit admittedly in a less overt sense in that case, but be in love in the sense of a fundamental commitment to and concern for what is true and good and the common wealth).

All of this is to speak of the fundamental dynamism which is characteristic of the human spirit. It is manifest in the desire to know, a desire which is limitless in its reach, and which seeks an unlimited intelligible, ultimate truth, the truth that grounds all truth, and in the desire for the good which is similarly limitless, knows no bounds, and seeks an unlimited good, the ultimate good which grounds all that is good. Its ceaseless quest is the ultimate horizon of what is good and true, even though the horizon that lies beyond all of our striving may remain implicit and unthematized. It is in this sense, I contend, that we can speak of religious and of the essence of education as essentially religious. So, to say that the essence of education is religious is to advert to the dynamism of human person whose desire for truth and goodness ultimately seeks ultimate truth and goodness. In this sense the human person is religious, even if implicitly and not explicitly, and in this sense education, as the cultivation of the desire for truth and goodness and beauty, is in essence religious.

Education is more than the mere cultivation of values, more than the transmission of culture, more even than spiritual as such. (I suggest to the reader that ‘spiritual’ describes the orientation and dynamism of the human person, while ‘religious’ refers to its ultimate term and horizon or destiny, so to speak.) It is more than a merely intellectual or cerebral academic endeavour. Rather, it is essentially concerned with the formation, indeed the transformation, of the mind and heart of the human person and the cultivation of the dynamism of self transcendence in its desire for what is true and for what is good and, as the ancients would rightly add, the beautiful. It aims to educe in human consciousness the principle of creativity, calling into question even the settled positions of culture itself. The educated person is not merely trained for a job, but is one who can criticise what society defines as the job; the educated person is not merely skilled in how to make a living, but how to make a life. In that sense, the essence of education is rightly and properly described as religious. Notice that I have described the essence of education as religious in

terms of the dynamism of the human person, the dynamism of human intentionality, and the implicit infinite horizon that is implied in the spiritual dynamism of the human person and the exercise of human subjectivity. It is in this sense, then, that we can speak of the essence of education, of all that is education (not simply that which is explicitly religious education, but all that is education as we understand it, as distinct from mere training or instruction or schooling), as the cultivation of the human person in his/her quest for the true and the good and the beautiful, and as such, in essence, a religious endeavour.

Education as Religious

Now in Christian faith and theology we bring a further level of explicitly religious consciousness to these considerations. The distinctly religious character of the endeavour of education then finds expression with singular clarity. Firstly, an explicitly Christian understanding of the dynamism and subjectivity of the human person names the infinite horizon of the human quest for the true and the good and the beautiful as God. Secondly, following Augustine and Aquinas, and the theological tradition that is their inheritance, the Christian tradition not only recognises the operations or faculties of understanding and love as expressive of the uniqueness of the human person; it recognises, precisely in those aspects, the very image of God in which the human person is created. Moreover, under the impetus of trinitarian faith, Christian theology finds an analogy, properly speaking, between the human person's operations or capacities for understanding and love and the trinitarian processions, by which the Word (or Son) and the Spirit proceed from the Father, who together constitute the mystery of God's triune being. In other words, trinitarian theology recognises that the inner-trinitarian processions of the Word/Son and the Love/Spirit are somewhat analogous to the operations and dynamism of human intentionality which issue in understanding and love.

The Christian tradition also understands that, in the order of grace, the human person actively participates in and is dynamically conformed to the understanding of the Word and the love of the Holy Spirit. The Trinity of the three divine persons comes to abide in the human person, and the indwelling divine persons dynamically conform the graced human person to the Triune God by conforming the human person's knowing and loving to the divine knowing and loving. Our self-transcending acts of knowing and loving are thus progressively conformed to the Trinity of divine persons present to us in grace. Thus transformed and conformed, the graced human person, albeit but dimly, understands and loves as God does. Admittedly, this insight afforded by the psychological image of the human person into the mystery of the Trinity has, for a variety of reasons, fallen seriously out of favour in contemporary Christian theological discourse, and the social models of the Trinity are currently enjoying the esteem once enjoyed by what came to be known as the psychological analogy. But the pearl of great value, the insight of perennial profundity, that lies at the heart of the psychological analogy, remains.

The Christian tradition thus understands the relationality that is so dear to modern understanding of the human person as firmly grounded in our real participation in the universe of divine creation, as both matter and spirit: (a) bodily, through being part of the physical cosmos; (b) spiritually, in that we participate, as the image of God, in the divine consciousness of knowing and loving; and (c) as graced, sharing in the life of God. In other words, the relationality is grounded in a real foundation, a foundation that is our real participation in the one mystery of being.

But note that, while an understanding and appreciation of the educational endeavour as inherently religious fits more easily within a Christian world view, my argument that the essence of education is that it be religious does not hang on a distinctly Christian understanding of God. It hangs on an analysis of the spiritual dynamism of the human person, an analysis of human intentionality which strives toward limitless truth and goodness, and ultimately the true and the good which grounds all that is true and good. Education as the cultivation of this quest for what is good and true and beautiful is, in this sense, religious. In other words, because the very essence or nature of the human person lies in this dynamism toward ultimate mystery, we can speak in terms of the very essence or nature of the human person as religious and of the very essence of the education of the human person as religious. We speak, moreover, of the *essence* of education as religious, meaning that the religious is not just a dimension of education, as if one dimension among many dimensions, but rather that the religious lies at the very heart of the matter, that it constitutes the very essence or core of our endeavours and permeates the entire process of education.

Education as Journey

Let us turn now to consider the notion of education more closely. Education is in fact in some ways a strange word. The English philosopher of education, Richard S. Peters (1967, p. 1) notes in an essay *What is an Educational Process* that 'education is a concept which is not very close to the ground.' Unlike red or horse, which identify qualities or objects, or running or smiling which identify observable occurrences, education refers to no particular process; rather it encapsulates criteria to which any one of a family of processes may conform. The very use of the word education, as well as the enormous investment of resources that our society makes in it, is indicative of a sense of importance and worthwhileness of the endeavour that we name as education. Intrinsic to the concept of education is the notion of having value—that certain things, activities and outcomes have value in themselves. Education implies the transmission and cultivation of what is of value, indeed of ultimate value. In other words, to educate someone not only implies some sort of achievement or outcome or transformation, but also one that is worthwhile. Is it not a contradiction in terms, for example, to speak of a *bad* education, for education implies what is good and worthwhile? A *bad* education is in fact no education at all!

On the other hand, can we really say we have had a *good* education? As a noun, education reads rather like a commodity, as if it is somehow capable of being parceled out, measured, distributed, ingested, even bought and sold. Admittedly, for a number of Western economies, international education has become a very significant contributor to the national economy and this has contributed to a certain commodification of education. But education is not a commodity defined by the culture, but rather what defines the creativity of the culture, resisting its entropy and promoting its progress. Moreover, it is not a thing but a process, indeed an intensely dynamic process. Education is in fact something that we do rather than something that we have. Despite the language of delivery in the education market place, we do not really deliver education. Rather we, as professionals in the field of education, provide the opportunity and stimuli for learning. Much as we as educators might work to persuade, cajole, even coerce our students in their learning, we cannot actually make our students learn. The learning resides in the student whose active participation is essential to the process. It is the learning that determines whether or not the 'event' in question is one of education or not, not the presence of an educator or even the intentional act of teaching *per se*. The teaching resides in the presentation and facilitation of the learning process and active engagement with the learner in his/her learning.

My own preference is to resist the noun *education* and to speak instead in terms of being educated, because it better connotes the sense of an ongoing process or journey, indeed a lifelong journey. The metaphor of journey is apt in a number of ways, not least because it renders the sense that it is never as if one's education is complete, finished, finalised. The metaphor of journey connotes an ongoing exploration, an unending task, a lifelong quest, of never having arrived, and of ever reaching further towards the unreachable. The metaphor of journey also speaks of the matter of attitude as of aptitude for the journey.

Richard S. Peters (1973, p. 20), in an article entitled *Aims of Education—A Conceptual Inquiry*, exquisitely captures this notion of education as journey when he writes: 'To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel with a different view.' Peters adds: 'What is required is not feverish preparation for something that lies ahead, but to work with a precision, passion and taste at worth-while things that lie at hand.' (See also Peters' article *What is an Educational Process*, 1967, p. 8.) Here too the notion of the nature of education as religious surfaces. It is, I suggest, to be found in Peter's notion of travelling 'with a different view'. Here, as I understand it, Peters means that education is not merely the acquisition of skills and information, but the transformation of the human person, a transformation that results in, and expresses itself in, a different view of life than would have pertained otherwise. From this perspective, education implies and requires that a person's outlook is transformed by what he/she learns. It has a distinctly *attitudinal* aspect, and one that encompasses more than mere acquisition of values. In other words, the educated person is transformed by the deepening and broadening of his/her understanding and sensitivity. The transformation permeates his or her whole way of perceiving, thinking, acting and being.

The notion of a different view also alerts us to the nature of the journey itself and picks up on the inner personal journey, the journey within, the journey towards ever-deeper authenticity and ever more genuine subjectivity. The measure of one's education in this larger perspective is not the competencies and attributes acquired or even the values instilled, but the qualitatively different view that has been cultivated. Clearly, by a different view we do not mean a particular set of ideas or doctrines. Education is not indoctrination. The different view refers to the transformed heart and mind that results from the educational process, and which finds expression in a different attitude or perspective. It is a perspective that is ethical, and yet more than ethical in any narrow sense. It is a perspective that is expansive in its sense of the whole, magnanimous in its concern for the common wealth, open-minded and open-hearted in its self-transcending commitment to what is true, good and beautiful. The Australian theologian Anthony Kelly CSsR (2004) captures it, in an as yet unpublished paper, in terms of a symphony of consciousness, 'in which mind and heart, sense and imagination, intelligence and responsibility, body and spirit, reason and faith, all have their respective parts to play.' Recall the common sense in the public domain, described earlier in this paper, that an educated person is more than simply skillful or well informed or knowledgeable, but manifests a nobility of spirit, a certain generous and gracious comprehension of reality, a certain wisdom. The metaphor of journey also resonates with the notion of wisdom, as attuned to the deepest desires of the human heart and their ultimate quest and fulfilment. Here too we find intimations of the sacred, intimations and presentiments—promises indeed—that the essence of the endeavour that is named as education is distinctly and profoundly religious.

Education in a Christian School or University

In a Christian school or university the religious dimension of education rightly and properly finds explicit expression, and in a distinctly Christian form. The publicly professed Christian identity of the school or university provides the context for the explicit articulation of the inherently religious character of education. Here I would like to elaborate on some of the implications of an understanding and appreciation of education as essentially religious.

It means first and foremost, I suggest, an explicit acknowledgment of the tasks of education as deeply and intrinsically religious, beyond the acquisition of measurable graduate attributes, skills and competencies, of information and technical expertise, even of values. It envisages nothing less than the cultivation of a worldview that is attuned to the sacred, to what Rabbi Abraham Heschel (1984, p. 16) describes as 'the holy dimension of all existence.'

As a Christian university or school, an appreciation of education as essentially religious means that an explicit concern for the whole, for all creation, the common good, and the common wealth, informs all that we do and all that we strive for. Here Weil (1950, p. 100) would challenge any small-mindedness in our thinking for, as she comments, 'How can Christianity call itself catholic if the universe itself

is left out?’ The point is that the catholicity of our vision, the catholicity of the horizon within which we live and work and commit ourselves, is intrinsic to our work in education. Indeed, our Christian convictions recast the very notion of our endeavours in education in terms of mission, a mission to bring to consciousness that implicit horizon that we recognise, name, worship and adore as God.

An appreciation of education as essentially religious also implicates an understanding and appreciation of the student *qua* human person in explicitly religious terms, irrespective of the actual faith conviction and religious affiliation, or lack of it, of the actual student concerned. It esteems the inalienable dignity of the student and the sacredness of his/her journey, and the sense, so beautifully depicted in the poem *Five Days Old* by the Australian poet Francis Webb (1969, p. 150), that together, as teachers and learners (and we are all both teachers and learners), we are ‘launched upon sacred seas in the mystery of creation’. Christian faith further hones our understanding of the human person and of the ultimacy of the human quest for the true and the good, in terms of the student’s ultimate destiny, as loved by God, as destined for eternal life, and as called to mission in this life, a mission to serving the common good.

In terms of our aims and our objectives for our students and their learning it means that our aspirations are not reduced to a notion of measurable skills and competencies. It is not, of course, that we resile from the work of developing skills and competencies, but that we work and hope for so much more. Indeed, we dare to aspire that our graduates will go on and will ‘fare forward’, as T. S. Eliot (1963, p. 211) says in ‘The Dry Salvages’ in *The Four Quartets*—‘Not fare well, But fare forward, voyagers’, imbued with a sense of the distinctly religious dimension of their lives and their professional work and the contribution that they have to make to the world. We aim for an expansive and magnanimous, and indeed an explicitly religious, sense of what it means to be human and of human destiny. We aim for not just technical competencies, for more than values, for more even than gospel values. We aim for the living out of the gospel message itself, which is not about something but Someone, and about ourselves as being called and becoming someone too, indeed children of God, co-creators: ‘I have come that you may have life and have it to the full’ (Jn 10:10).

An appreciation of education as essentially religious also implicates an understanding and appreciation of ourselves and our role as educators. Thomas Groome (1998, p. 37) refers to Plato’s evocative description of teaching as ‘turning the soul’ of learners; in other words, of shaping their inmost being, turning their souls toward the true, the good, the beautiful—the outcome of which is wisdom and the virtuous life. Our goal as educators is much more than benchmarked outcomes in terms of the graduate attributes, but wisdom, virtue, magnanimity, and nobility of spirit. Moreover, our appreciation of education as religious extends our horizon of concern beyond the students’ academic progress to encompass their whole lives and finds expression in our pastoral concern for their whole development and well-being. Education in a Christian school or university is expressly concerned not just with how to make a living but how to make a life, and indeed how to make of their lives

a work of art, no less! Hence community engagement and social justice outreach programs are our proper concerns and, as such, not optional extras but intrinsic to our programs. So too our rituals and celebrations and the sense of the sacred to which they explicitly refer.

In terms of our goals and aspirations for the school or university itself, a keen sense of education as religious means an explicit commitment to an intrinsically religious vision of education and, integral to that, the pre-eminent place of theology and of religious education among its programs, as beacon lights, singularly concerned with education as religious. Moreover, they are rightly and properly not just pre-eminent *among* but *through* its programs, for the catholicity of our vision, our sense of the whole—which necessarily includes a vibrant sense of history and tradition and the place of the arts—and of the interrelatedness of everything that is, prizes interdisciplinary collaboration in our courses, programs, research and vision. In this regard, Michael Paul Gallagher (2004, p. 171) offers insightful reflections on the contemporary debate concerning university education in general and Catholic university education in particular, including a call for ‘a more integrated and integrating humanism’, as distinct from the narrow specialisations of so much academic work today.

Our Hopes Touch on the Infinite

Early in our paper we referred to such monumental achievements as Pythagorus’ Theorem, Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, the Theory of Chaos, the Sydney Opera House, the landing on the Moon, and to Giotto’s paintings, Leonardo da Vinci’s drawings, Mozart’s symphonies, Bernini’s angels, and we might also add the insights of the mystics. All stand as testimony to the remarkable capacity of the human mind and heart. But they stand not just as testimony to the capacities of the human person, but as presentiments and promises, promises of the fulfillment of our ultimate desires and longings, promises that cannot be fulfilled in this life, promises that await fulfillment in the fullness of life and Light which awaits us in the next life.

To speak, then, of education as religious is to advert to the deepest desires of the human heart and the ultimacy of the human person’s quest for what is true and good, and thus to the ultimacy that is inherent in the endeavour that is education. The notion of the essence of education as religious is grounded in the quest for truth and goodness and beauty and, implied in that quest, the quest for ultimate truth and goodness and beauty, the truth and goodness and beauty that is implicated in all truths and all goods. In the words of Thérèse of Lisieux (1992, p. 224), our hopes, our ultimate desires and our deepest longings ‘touch on the infinite’. The essence of education, as the expression and cultivation of the immanent self-transcending dynamism of human subjectivity, is religious.

In expressly Christian centres of education, whatever the age and stage of the students involved, the implicitly religious dimension of education is brought to explicit expression. The ultimate horizon that is implied in the quest for truth that

lies at the heart of the endeavour of education is, in the Christian setting, named and proclaimed and adored as God, the triune God who so loved the world that he sent his beloved only Son and who, abiding in us, conforms us to the divine understanding and love and calls us share in the divine mission of love for the world.

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PHENOMENOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THEORY

Kathleen Engebretson

School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University

Expanding the Discourse About Religious Education Beyond Theology

Up until the 1970s, discourses about religious education were generally theological and ecclesial, and were to a large extent, conducted by and within Christian traditions. During the twentieth century, however, the progress of globalisation and patterns of migration to Western countries meant not only that the cultural composition of these countries changed, but also that they became home to a wide variety of religions and cultural expressions of these religions. Theories of religious education that assumed Christianity as foundational, or even that were biased for one form of religious expression over another, became increasingly ill suited to multi-religious societies and school systems. Religious educators, scholars and academics in Britain led the ‘religious studies’ movement, that expanded the field of theory in religious education beyond the domination of the Christian tradition.

Like all significant changes in education, the development of a new theory of religious education suited to multi-religious schools was gradual. The Butler Act of 1944 in England had made religious education compulsory in all county schools, and it was to be taught using an ‘agreed syllabus’ that would be developed under the authority of the Local Education Authority by all of the religious groups represented in the local area. Hull (1984) has documented the history of the agreed syllabi, showing that up to 1964 they concentrated on study of the past, particularly through the Bible and examples of exemplary Christian life. In the later 1960s, the agreed syllabi revealed more understanding of the experiential dimension of religious education, but these still saw religious education essentially as education in and about Christianity. Hull (1984, p. 80) illustrated the changes that were coming when he quoted from the first of the syllabi to attend to the multi-religious nature

of the British community, the Bath Agreed Syllabus of 1970, that the primary aim of religious education was to help young people to understand the nature of religion.

The city of Birmingham was the first to develop a religious education syllabus that took account of the multi-religious nature of its population, allowing for breadth of studies of religions as they were represented in the local community, and also for a particular study of one religion if the population of the school required this. The revised Birmingham Syllabus of 1970 was extremely significant for its commitment to 'a religious education syllabus that would make a positive contribution to community relations in the city' (Hull, 1984, p. 87), and for the fact that there was a distinction made between the personal religious convictions of the teacher and the syllabus content. The Birmingham syllabus could be taught by any 'well informed teacher of good will, regardless of his faith, to any interested pupils, regardless of their faith' (Hull, 1984, p. 88). It was intended to develop a critical but tolerant understanding of religion in a modern secular content, and its approach was descriptive and existential.

Hull observed that after the Birmingham syllabus, the agreed syllabi were never as influential as they had been, but he claimed that they gave 'official approval and recognition to trends already established' and registered 'the climate of the subject and set out its norms' (1984, p. 91).

Phenomenology

These trends and the climate of religious education in Britain in the 60s and 70s were significantly influenced by the work of Ninian Smart (1968, 1974, 1976, 1978,) who advocated the study of religion as a means of gaining greater understanding of human experience and of the world in which we live, without 'interest in or intention of evangelising' (Lovat, 1995, p. 1). The sociologist of religion, Durkheim (1976), had argued for the 'scientific or rational' (Nisbet, 1976, v.) study of religion, applying scientific analysis to its origins, development, and practice from the perspective of an independent observer. The purpose of this was to gain insights into religion as a whole, its history, its nature and its relationship to other phenomena in human life. Smart took up this emphasis, and developed a phenomenological approach to the study of religion drawing on the philosophy of Husserl (1983).

Husserl's philosophy of phenomenology began from the fact of the human being surrounded by a world full of 'corporeal, physical things' (1983, p. 51), animate and inanimate, which are present to human consciousness or, if unheeded, present to intuition. Each of these has its own actuality independent of one's perception of it. They include objects, but also ideas, experiences, traditions, values, other people; in fact the entire range of objects of human experience and perception. These objects or 'phenomena' furnish the individual's conscious and semi-conscious worlds.

In my waking consciousness I find myself in this manner at all times, and without ever being able to alter the fact, in relation to the world which remains one and the same, though changing with respect to the composition of its contents. It is continually 'on hand' 'for me and I myself am a member of it' (Husserl, 1983, p. 53).

Any apprehension of experience and the world must begin with the 'the natural standpoint, from the world as it confronts us' (Husserl, 1983, xix). This apprehension of the world, however, involves eidetic judgments, or judgments about the essential nature of the objects within it. These eidetic judgments lead, through description, comparison and analysis, to identification of universal phenomena within which the individual essences cohere. 'Any judgment about essences can be converted into an equivalent unconditionally universal judgment about single particulars' (p. 13). The reduction of individual phenomena into phenomenological universals leads to discovery of the complex relationships between these universals.

Good eidetic judgments about individual phenomena, and the consequent classification of these as examples of universal phenomena, require 'epoche', or suspension by the observer of all preconceptions, so that phenomena may be seen for what they are. This involves firstly a conscious 'bracketing' (Habel & Moore, 1982) of empirical preconceptions, (which cause the observer too often to come to hasty conclusions about phenomena), so that we may neutrally and objectively see 'what stands before our eyes' (Husserl, 1958, p. 43). Secondly, it involves a suspension of preoccupation with facts, to see through the phenomenon being observed to encounter its essence, the pure phenomenon. The phenomenologist therefore must learn to put aside preconceptions about what they observe, and not be distracted by the outward form of the phenomenon, in order to look to its pure essence, classify it within a universal phenomenon, and perhaps extract personal meaning from it. The phenomenologist is first a detached observer of phenomena, for the purpose of identifying their essence, finding the dissonances and coherence between them, reducing multiple phenomena to broader universal phenomena, seeing the relationships between universal phenomena so that patterns of experience and meaning may be uncovered.

Phenomenology and Religion

In 1958 Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* had claimed that religious consciousness or awareness of the numinous or the sacred existed *a priori* in the human experience. That is not that everyone is religiously conscious, but that everyone is capable of being so. It is a capacity of human nature which 'issues from the deepest foundation of cognitive apprehension that the soul possesses,' and which must be awakened. 'It does not arise out of [the data of the natural world] but only by their means' (Otto, 1958, p. 112).

That there are 'predispositions' of this sort in individuals no one can deny who has given serious study to the history of religion. They are seen as propensities predestining the individual to religion, and they may grow spontaneously to quasi-instinctive presentiments, uneasy seeking and groping, yearning and longing, and become a religious impulsion which only finds peace when it has become clear to itself and attained its goal (Otto, 1958, p. 115).

Predisposition to the numinous or religious consciousness has an *a priori* existence within the human mind, and is manifested in history in outward behaviours, values, attitudes, beliefs, which are not intrinsic to the predisposition but differently and in different historical contexts allow the person to express it. According to Otto, the phenomenon of religious consciousness, as well as the many phenomena through which it is manifested in history, may be studied, as they exist, through description and rigorous analysis. This may uncover patterns of meaning, and ultimately bring the student at least to knowledge of key images of, if not experience of, the 'entity' that is at the heart of religious consciousness.

Studying Religious Phenomena: Observation

The philosophies of Husserl and Otto helped to lead to the development of the philosophy of the study of religious phenomena, (Eliade, 1958; Hick, 1991) and to the work of Ninian Smart who was concerned with 'trying to exhibit religion and religions through uncovering the anatomy of Religion' (1973, p. 52). The following sections of this chapter illustrate Smart's phenomenological method in regard to the study of religion, and the final sections review contemporary critique of the method.

The first step in the phenomenology of religion is simply to plunge into observation and experience of religious phenomena, bracketing one's own experience, preconceptions and beliefs in order to experience and learn about the phenomenon in an unbiased way. Depending on the phenomenon being studied, this will involve all of the senses in collecting data about the object of study. This is well illustrated in numerous examples given in the BBC series *The Long Search* (1979). This series of documentaries illustrated Smart's phenomenological method for the study of religion, and involved the presenter Ronald Eyre in a three-year investigation of religious phenomena around the world. Examples were drawn from ancient and modern, as well as local and diffused religions (Lovat, 1995, p. 9; 2002, p. 45). In one series of episodes Eyre was shown at St. Peter's Square in Rome, and later within St. Peter's Basilica, observing the splendour of a papal Mass. In a related episode he stayed with a group of young religious brothers who lived in simplicity in a village in the desert, shared their lives with the local people, and celebrated daily the same ritual that Eyre saw celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica. Eyre's investigation was, to use a contemporary colloquialism, 'hands on'. He did not give long descriptions or historical summaries, but entered into the story, ritual symbol or other phenomenon with the believer in order to understand it. He approached the

investigation as an outsider, and did not bring to it any judgments that may have obstructed his ability to 'see what is before his eyes'. In both instances noted above Eyre observed and listened, asked many questions and used whatever other means were appropriate to gather data about the phenomenon.

Stepping into the Shoes of the Believer

This almost clinical gathering of data, however, is only the first step. In the words of Smart:

But religion is not something that one can see. The significance needs to be approached through the inner life of those who use the externals. The history of religion must be more than the chronicling of events. It must be an attempt to enter into the meanings of those events. So it is not enough to survey the course which the religious history of mankind has taken, it must also penetrate into the hearts and minds of those who have been involved in that history (Smart, 1976).

For Smart, while learning about and coming to understand something of a religious phenomenon did not involve adopting the belief system of the religion to which the phenomenon belonged, it did require 'imaginative participation' (Smart, 1974, p. 3) in the world of the believer. The phenomenologist must 'step into the shoes' of a believer in order to see the phenomenon through their eyes, and thus come to understand something of its significance. In *The Long Search* Eyre witnessed funerals and initiation rituals, talked to believers about their beliefs, participated when invited and always described what was evident to his senses, as well as raising his own thoughts, feelings and questions about the phenomenon. This 'stepping into the shoes' of the believer represented for Smart the intuitive side of religious studies, the side that deals with what a phenomenon means. Thus, after his stay with the brothers in the desert, Eyre reflected on what he had seen heard and experienced, and on the reasons why young men might take up this lifestyle. He distilled the meaning of the experience for himself, through appropriating the knowledge in a critical way, assessing its meaning for himself, 'picking the eyes out' (Habel & Moore, 1982) of the knowledge in order to gain some personal learning. This is the eidetic aspect of the study of religion, and it can only be done after the religious phenomenon has been fully investigated, analysed and described objectively (Lovat, 2002, p. 89). The 'judicial and critical assessment' that comes after the description of the phenomenon is Husserl's 'eidetic science', the effort to get to the heart or the essence of the phenomenon, and it is absolutely essential to the use of the method. As Lovat points out (2002, p. 88), those who criticise the phenomenological study of religious as dry, clinical, over-cognitive and relying on an unrealistic putting aside of one's own judgment have only understood its first step. The intuitive aspect follows the objective observation and description, and it is here that the student appropriates the knowledge that has been gained in a way

that is reflective and critical, and that allows personal meaning to be drawn from it. In a later paper Lovat even claimed that this intuitive, subjective dimension of the phenomenology of religions could allow for the discussion of personal religious commitment (Lovat, 2005).

Classifying Individual Phenomena into Universal Categories

While Smart saw religions as whole systems that communicate meaning, he identified six dimensions that could be found in religions, and that could be used as the basis of comparison and contrast between them. These dimensions were mythological, ritual, doctrinal, social, ethical and experiential. Each dimension has many layers. The mythological dimension, for example, represents all types of sacred stories and includes myths, legends, parables, and epics. The ritual dimension represents the many varieties of rituals celebrated in religions throughout the life cycle, including rites of passage, communication, cleansing and thanksgiving. The social dimension includes all of the ways in which a religion is organised, its social structure, history and relationships with the cultures in which it exists. It includes sacred space, sacred time, sacred persons and roles, especially as they relate to stories and rituals. The doctrinal dimension refers to the many different forms of beliefs that religions hold, including beliefs about the nature of deities, about the world and about the afterlife. The experiential refers to the many forms and varieties of religious experiences, such as revelations, numinous experiences, ecstasy and many others ways in which people experience the sacred. The ethical dimension covers the laws of a religion and the values that are inherent in these laws. While the dimensions are differentiated for the purpose of identification and classification, the links between them are more important. Ritual, for example, is founded upon sacred story, makes use of social structure, expresses and communicates key beliefs, is based first upon an initial religious experience and makes possible religious experience for those who participate in the ritual.

When individual phenomena have been subjected to observation, listening and, in the case of physical objects, handled if possible, and after consideration has been given to their meaning for the believer, the phenomenon may be classified into its wider dimension. For example, the Christian belief in God as Trinity belongs to the doctrinal dimension of religion, just as does the Hindu belief in Brahman and his many manifestations, just as does the foundational belief of Islam, the *shahada*: *I testify that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his servant and messenger*. The Buddhist belief in nirvana may be put alongside Christian and Muslim beliefs about the last judgment and paradise, and classified as beliefs about life after death. Thus each phenomenon is seen within its wider context, is able to be compared and contrasted with other phenomena of the same type and discloses patterns across religions that help students to understand much more fully and deeply the phenomenon we call religion. This study can lead to personal reflection about whether the patterns that are obvious in religious traditions across time and

space are anthropologically grounded; about whether they point to a capacity for attentiveness to the sacred that is innate in human nature, and even about whether the patterns through which this is expressed are biologically determined. The student of the phenomenology of religion is brought into the worldwide experience of religion with all that it has the potential to bring to the individual's search for personal meaning.

Habel and Moore (1982) and Typology

Two Australian scholars, Habel and Moore, saw the potential of Smart's phenomenology of religion for religious education. Because Smart had not designed a practical way in which phenomenology could be used with children and young people in the classroom, they set out to develop it into a religious education method. Using Smart's five dimensions of religions as the starting point, they identified eight 'types' as the 'building blocks' or fundamental elements of religions. Initial knowledge of these types—beliefs, sacred stories, sacred texts, rituals, social structure, symbols, ethics, religious experience—would give the students a language or a map through which religions may be studied. The types are the keys to learning about religion, just as words are the keys to literacy and numbers the keys to numeracy (Lovat, 2002).

A further aspect of typology is that while it is cross cultural, intending that students learn about a range of religious traditions and phenomena within them, it begins with the home tradition, that is, the religious tradition with which the student is most familiar. Only when a phenomenon has been identified within the home tradition is it taken into a broader context and shown against other examples of the type. A religious education class in a Jewish school, therefore, may begin with the story of the journey of Moses and the people from Egypt across the desert to the Promised Land (Exodus 3–24). The story would first be studied in its own right, seen in its historical, geographical and social contexts, identified within the sacred text, its elements explored and listed. Next the story would be classified as a sacred legend, and particularly as one with a journey motif. Other forms of journey stories would be read, some secular, but many from religious traditions. The journey of Jesus into the desert from Christianity (Mark 1:12–14) may be used, as may the journey of Mohammed to Medina, or the journey of the Buddha out into the world. Examples of similar stories may also be drawn from local tribal religions. The elements of the stories are listed and compared, so that the original story of Moses and the peoples' journey through the desert is shown against the patterns of the other stories, and similarities and differences are noted. Finally the original story, having been studied in the wider context, is brought back into the home tradition, and its significance in relation to the other elements—for example, its place as a foundation of ritual—is shown. In the final step, students are encouraged to reflect on the meaning of the story, both for participants in the home tradition and for themselves.

The Impact of Phenomenology on Religious Education Curricula

The phenomenological approach to the study of religion has been extremely influential in Britain, Europe and Australia, where it has presented a non-judgmental way of studying religions as phenomena of human existence, and thus of contributing to greater understanding and tolerance of the religious groups within a local community. In Britain, Grimmitt (1973; 1987; 2000) argued for greater attention to the purpose of religion as the search for meaning, and his work has helped teachers to use religious phenomena to encourage students to explore ultimate questions. In Australia during the 1980s all states developed education acts which included in their recommendations that state schools attend to the study of religion in an objective but sympathetic way, an activity which, it was hoped, would develop greater understanding and tolerance of religious groups in the increasingly religiously diverse Australian community. By the late 1980s and early 1990s (with the exception of South Australia which had had a religious studies subject for state schools since the 1970s) all Australian states had introduced into their senior secondary curriculum elective religious studies units based on the phenomenological method. In Victoria, the home state of the author of this chapter, the study was entitled *Religion and Society*, and it dealt with issues of religion and identity, roles and rituals in religions, the experiences of religious believers within their traditions, ethics, past and present challenges to religious traditions and religious beliefs in action. It is argued elsewhere that while *Religion and Society* is clearly phenomenological in emphasis it also owes much to the depth themes and ultimate questions approaches of Grimmitt, which are discussed in another chapter of this section of the Handbook (Engebretson, 1995). While the study has been enthusiastically embraced by Catholic schools, which in Victoria make up the largest single body of schools apart from the state system, it has also been taken up by other Christian, Jewish and Muslim schools and, to a lesser but growing degree, by state schools. In 2001 in Victoria, *Religion and Society* had the most significantly increased enrolment of all studies within the senior curriculum, and it continues to retain this level of enrolment through successive revisions. Writing of the similar reception the New South Wales *Studies in Religion* curriculum had received, Lovat attests the 'cleverness' of phenomenology:

The capacity of a subject to function in such diverse settings and clearly be seen as contributing to the ethos of such different kinds of schools says much in my view about the flexibility and unique cleverness of phenomenology as a method (Lovat, 2005, p. 46).

The influence of phenomenology on religious education curricula in Australia however has not stopped there. All Christian schools now include studies of other religions in their religious education curricula, and as schools revise their religious education curricula a more educational focus may be seen (see the chapter contributed by Buchanan to this section of the Handbook). While this owes much to a more sophisticated discourse about religious education among Christian schools

in Australia, it has also developed, in the opinion of this author, from the successful presence of the phenomenological approach in the state based courses in the senior school certificate.

Controversy About Phenomenology as a Method for Religious Education

During 2001 a debate was conducted in the journal *Religious Education* between Terence Lovat (2001), an Australian scholar and proponent of the phenomenological method in religious education, and Philip Barnes of the University of Ulster (2001, 2001a) who wrote in the context of the British education system, where the method of phenomenology in the study of religion was widespread. Barnes began his critique with a review of a 1988 debate in the House of Lords, where Christian groups had successfully lobbied for Christianity to be privileged in agreed syllabi, because Christian traditions were in the majority in the community. Barnes showed how the debate quickly became ideological, with an increasingly conservative Christian lobby attempting to assert Christian supremacy and marginalise adherents of other religions, while those who advocated phenomenology contented themselves with exposing the prejudices of their opponents, and appropriating the moral high ground of tolerance, openness, autonomy and social justice. After his careful description of the phenomenological approach to the study of religions that followed his review of the debate, Barnes attempted to raise what he considered were the critical issues that surrounded the use of phenomenology as a method in religious education.

He claimed that the assumptions that underlie phenomenology of religion—that is, that there is an essence of religion, that this essence is experienced in religious consciousness, and that there is a dichotomy between religious experience and the language used to describe it—can no longer be held. He challenged the basic premises of phenomenology, that the heart of religion is located in the experiential self, that the stories, rituals, language and symbols that express it in the world are distinct from this consciousness, and that religious consciousness extends far deeper than, and well beyond, these phenomena. Barnes (2001) summarised the phenomenological method in religious education in these words.

In studying religious founders or holy places, or sacred acts, one is being prepared for the moment of encounter with the Sacred. Education can only point. It can take one to the threshold of experience. It pauses at the door of the Holy—those who proceed further enter into the heart of religion and subsequently come to speak, however imperfectly, of the mystery encountered (Leech, 1989, cited in Barnes, 2001).

In the distinction made between religious awareness and conceptual thought, Barnes argued, the phenomenologist of religion is able to avoid the controversial activity of assessing the truth claims of religions, since rival doctrinal expressions are just various expressions of the common religious consciousness. He claimed

that phenomenology was now highly questionable, because its basic assumption that religious experience (consciousness) and the expression of this in religious language and concepts are separate, can no longer be held. He argued from the later philosophy of Wittgenstein (1958, 1969) that religious concepts and religious language, rather than being separate from religious experience, actually structure and condition it. Feelings, emotions and religious consciousnesses do not exist *a priori* but are dependent upon language and concepts for their existence. 'Without the appropriate religious concepts and religious language there would be not religious experience'. (Barnes, 2001, p. 456).

The argument follows that if personal experience of the divine is structured and conditioned by the ways in which religions express it through the public symbols of faith, then both the privacy and universality of religious experience is questioned. Education should not just study how people express religion, but should also critique religions in terms of their validity and relevance.

There is no privileged domain of introspective knowledge. Private experience is a function of public discourse, intrinsically dependent upon the latter. Understanding religion is not achieved by attempts to intuit its essence, but by coming to know its public discourse and by being able to enter into a world where that discourse is an expression and a part. The aim of religious education should be to advance and enable such an understanding (Barnes, 2001, p. 457).

The essence of Barnes' critique therefore was that phenomenology should be abandoned as a method in religious education, because it is founded on philosophical assumptions that are no longer tenable. There are no 'religious truths too deep for words' (p. 458) that form the heart of religion. Religious consciousness is conceptually, linguistically and culturally bound and so is open to critique, a dimension of religious education that has been studiously avoided by phenomenologists.

In response Lovat (2001) first observed that Barnes' problem was perhaps not so much with phenomenology itself, but with the possibility of objective truth in regard to religion at all. Barnes critiqued phenomenology because of his perception that it claims an essentialist core to religion that is independent of the words, concepts and symbols used to express it, but Lovat argued that Barnes has overstated this dichotomy. If Husserl (1983) distinguished between the experience of a phenomenon and its language, concepts and symbols, this distinction had a methodological purpose. Husserl was concerned with the suspension of empirical judgment (*epoché*) about phenomena so that the essence they expressed could be more clearly seen. 'Cleared of the pre-emptive judgments encouraged by empiricism, one can make a new set of judgments, formed by a more impartial, dispassionate, one might even say even-handed analysis' (Lovat, 2001, p. 565).

Furthermore, Lovat argued, Husserl himself was not overly concerned with what is the burning issue for Barnes, the objectivity of essence. Whether the essence of a phenomenon is objectively factual or the product of culturally conditioned experience was not the main point of phenomenology. Husserl's concern was simply

for a different method of investigation, and his respect for Otto was not primarily because of Otto's findings about the *a priori* nature of religious consciousness, but for the method Otto employed, the gathering of data after the careful suspension of his own views, and attention to precise description. The fact that Husserl promoted a *methodology* is, Lovat argued, an important point to which Barnes did not give sufficient attention, but this is the aspect of phenomenology that has led to its success as a method in religious education. Religious education teachers, after all, understand how pointless dogmatism is in education. They are also wary of the critical assessment of religious claims for which Barnes calls, for this closes off enquiry, pre-empts research and dialogue, and in any case is counterproductive in the multi-religious environment of the public school. Rather than close off enquiry through premature critique, Husserl's method encouraged suspension of judgment in the interests of growing in knowledge and understanding.

Ultimately, philosophical debate notwithstanding (and Lovat argued that, far from being untenable, phenomenology takes in ancient [Aristotle, Aquinas] as well as modern philosophies [Habermas, 1972; 1974; Eisner, 1979]), Lovat argued that phenomenological religious education has been successful because it works. For the public school teacher of religion it provides a methodology that can be employed at some distance from the personal religious convictions of teacher and student. It does not enter into potentially divisive debates about religious truth claims, and in this neutrality it is able to promote religious literacy through open enquiry.

Later in the same year, Barnes responded, again through the journal *Religious Education*, repeating his belief that the phenomenological approach to religious education was 'deeply flawed' (Barnes, 2001a, p. 572), and that as a methodology it falsified religion by separating religious experience from religious doctrine, and giving greater priority to the former. In this, he argued, Liberal Protestantism had 'won'.

The Liberal Protestant synthesis of opposing religions and spiritualities is complete: religious truth is manifold yet ultimately one. The need for tolerance and understanding in our religiously plural world is transcended as 'the other' is discovered to be ultimately in agreement with ourselves' (p. 573).

Here Barnes returned to his original argument, that debates about religious education in Britain had become ideological. While educationalists like Lovat may claim a particular methodology because it works politically and in practice, pragmatism is no excuse for allowing political, ideological or economic agendas to control the school curriculum. 'Phenomenology effectively functions as a form of Liberal Protestant apologetics (even confessionalism); all the more insidious because it is unacknowledged' (p. 575).

After arguing that the phenomenological method in religious education is ideologically founded, Barnes returned to his premise that phenomenology falsifies religion by putting religious experience first, and such expressions of religious experience as dogma only second. Barnes argued that an appreciation of religion is gained by first knowing religious concepts and language. Doctrines, beliefs and values facilitate

religious experience, and these therefore should be the starting point of religious education. Furthermore, Barnes argued, the foundations of phenomenology, *epoche* and *eidetic vision*, are arguably beyond the capacity of children and young people in the school years. Ultimately he eschewed phenomenology as a method in religious education because it ‘refuses to address and explore the issue of religious truth: how is religious truth to be determined and what criteria are appropriate and so on?’ (p. 581).

Some Responses to the Controversy

The debate between Barnes and Lovat was enlightening, not just for its content but also for the way in which it was able to sharpen some of the issues that surround debates about religious education in general. The first of these issues is the extent to which any discussion about religious education can be free of ideology. Is Barnes less ideologically driven, for example, in his prioritising of religious doctrine over religious experience, than the Liberal Protestants he accuses of doing the opposite? Is he less ideologically driven than Lovat whom, he claimed, at least by implication, is the servant of expediency and political correctness? Ultimately an issue worthy of consideration is the extent to which any person’s history, religious convictions and views about the place of religion in life drive their approach to religious education curriculum. The problem is that when personal or community religious convictions collide with different traditions, no education is possible unless both parties are able to step back, put aside their own judgments and listen to each other. It is precisely this skill that phenomenology in religious education both teaches and insists upon. The skill does not favour confessional approaches to religious education, but even schools that have held rigidly confessional views about religious education (for example Catholic schools in this author’s home state) have come to see that dialogue about religion in a religiously diverse community is not advanced by taking an entrenched position, but by listening and empathy. These schools, too, understand that this is even more important at a time when some religious communities are being scapegoated for the activities of fanatical fringe groups that exist on the edges of their tradition. If nothing else, phenomenology can respond to the religious suspicion that is currently affecting the world community.

I suspect that phenomenologists and the theorists of religious education represented by Barnes will never resolve the issue of which is central to religion, the experiential religious consciousness or the language, concepts doctrines which explain religion to the world. Methodologically, however, the distinction is important, and this is the second issue raised by the Barnes/Lovat debate. Generations of Catholics in the 1960s and 1970s (no doubt there was a similar pattern in other Christian Churches) began an exodus from the Church as it then was, because the dogma that they were expected to believe did not cohere with their religious experience. Today it is so much a given fact that young people trust in spiritual experience and pick and choose the vehicles they use to express this, that it is simply assumed in literature about young people’s spirituality. Crawford & Rossiter (1995)

and Rossiter (1985) for example, among many Australian and international theorists (see also Engebretson, Rymarz & Fleming, 2002), have written of the 'super-market' approach to religion taken by young people in Western secular countries. They express the inner experience of religious consciousness sometimes in beliefs flavoured by Buddhism, at other times in beliefs that are a mixture of Christianity and new age trends, and very few young people take on the whole package of a religious tradition. They prefer to choose elements from one or more traditions, or dismiss religious traditions altogether, asserting the primacy of personal spirituality. Whatever the personal religious convictions of the religious educator may be about the priority of doctrine over religious experience, the young people they teach have already voted with their feet.

This brings me to the third issue raised by the debate, and that is the extent to which phenomenology is an appropriate method for young people whom Barnes claims may not have reached the Piagetian stage of cognitive development designated as 'formal operations'. Are *epoche* and *eidetic* vision possible for them? Leaving aside the irony that it is these very young people (perhaps not capable of formal operations) whom Barnes wants to assess truth claims in religion, for an educationalist this question carries little weight. If Piaget's stages of cognitive development are assumed (and not all educationalists uncritically accept them) formal operations theoretically should occur for most children in the early teenage years, making phenomenology at least appropriate for secondary school students. In Australia many thousands of young people have shown their ability to suspend their own judgment and to undertake the descriptions and analysis required by phenomenology in the state religious studies units, in large and increasing numbers. Although numbers enrolled in the studies in state schools are increasing, for the most part these have been young people from religious schools. They have shown the capacity to put aside their own judgment and presumably many years of 'confessional' religious education to enter into the religious worlds of others and, have been judged to have done so successfully by external examiners. Indeed, a certain natural suspension of religious convictions usually occurs for even religiously committed young people in their teenage years. Interestingly enough it was the Catholic religious educator, Gerard Rummery (1975), who claimed that phenomenology may be just the method for these young people, because it provides a climate where their own religious doubts would not be the focus of attention in the religious education curriculum.

Conclusion

Phenomenology has been a force in religious education theory since at least the 1960s. Its longevity attests both that it works and that it has much to offer the multi-religious world in which the young people of Western secular societies live. Philip Barnes will probably argue, correctly, that the description and analysis of phenomenology contained in this chapter has again avoided the issue of which religion, if any, is right, that is has not addressed the complex question of religious

truth claims and the need for religious education to take account of these. This, however, is not the central issue for school curricula, with their young, captive and often disinterested audience, and it is around school curricula that discussions of phenomenology usually revolve. Teenagers cannot be expected to make a decision about whether this religion is right and this other wrong, especially when they live in families and communities where, for the most part, religion is a minor part of life if it encroaches on life at all. The task of the school years is to learn about the world in which one lives, and to begin to sharpen the critical faculties that will help one to make complex judgments in later years. The truth claims of religions **must** be assessed if any meaningful commitment to a tradition is to occur, but no-one can seriously expect children and young people to do this in any but the most obvious cases. The Catholic theologian, Hans Kung (1974), both argues for a critical assessment of the truth claims of religions and provides criteria by which this assessment may proceed, but he directs his advice to adult Christians taking part in inter-faith dialogue, not to children in schools. Moran (1983) also argues that the critical dialogue that occurs by bringing one's own tradition face to face with another, carefully explaining differences and discussing one's own religious convictions while still growing in respect for the other, is a task of adulthood. Careful attention to the skills implied in the phenomenological method in religious education may well prepare the way for this critical assessment later in life.

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LEARNING ABOUT AND LEARNING FROM RELIGION. THE PEDAGOGICAL THEORY OF MICHAEL GRIMMITT

Kathleen Engebretson

School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University

Introduction

Conversations about religious education up to the 1970s were dominated by the Christian traditions, and inevitably had a theological and ecclesial emphasis. During the twentieth century, however, the progress of globalisation and patterns of migration to Western countries meant not only that the cultural composition of these countries changed, but also that they became, and continue to become, home to a wide variety of religions and cultural expressions of these religions. The religious educators, scholars and academics of Britain led the religious studies movement that expanded the field of theory in religious education beyond the domination of the Christian traditions, giving it an inter-faith dimension. Prominent among these religious educators was Michael Grimmitt. In order to understand his contribution to theory, and therefore pedagogy, in religious education three themes from Grimmitt's work are proposed for consideration in this chapter. After discussion of these themes, as they apply to Grimmitt's pedagogy, two critiques of Grimmitt's work are presented and evaluated.

Religious Education as Education

Discussion of this theme first does not imply that it is the most important of the themes to which Grimmitt gave emphasis, for all three considered in this chapter are of equal importance. However, an examination of Grimmitt's views about the educational nature of religious education shows how, from the time of his 1973 *What can I do in RE?*, Grimmitt proposed a pedagogy that clearly differed from that of the Churches, who up until that time had dominated discussion about religious education (Burgess, 1996). Against the British background in which the

Agreed Syllabi for state schools had been dominated by Christianity and a Christian instruction paradigm (Hull, 1984), Grimmitt argued that the role of the state and the role of the Church in the study and teaching of religion were different. He summarised the key difference as that between *instructing* and *educating*, with the approach of the Churches assuming that Christianity was the answer to people's search for meaning, that the Bible was the inspired vehicle of Revelation, and that the aim of religious instruction was 'confessional' (Grimmitt, 1973, p. 18), its intention being to lead the student to commitment to Christianity. On the other hand, he argued, the study of religion in the state school needed to be justified on *educational* grounds. Drawing on Peters' (1966) view that education was about initiating young people into what is 'worthwhile...specific modes of thought and awareness, such as science, history, mathematics, religious and ascetic awareness together with moral prudential and technical forms of thought and action' (p. 50), in 1973 Grimmitt proposed the following criteria for justifying the inclusion of a subject in the curriculum on educational grounds.

- Does the subject incorporate a unique mode of thought and awareness that is 'worthwhile' for a person's understanding of self and human life?
- Does the subject widen and deepen the student's perspective in a unique and valuable way and so contribute to human development?
- Can the subject be taught in ways that ensure understanding and foster the child's ability for independent thought? (Grimmitt, 1973, p. 9–10).

Against these criteria he pointed out that the main educational objection to 'confessional' approaches was that they transposed a particular group of assumptions and pedagogies from the setting where they naturally belonged, the voluntary audience of Church or Sunday schools, to the non-voluntary, immature audience of compulsory state education. In keeping with the recently published *Schools Council Working Paper 36*, (1971) Grimmitt's choice of a structure for content was that of phenomenology. He argued that this approach to the organisation of content in the teaching of religion *did* introduce students to a 'mode of thought and awareness' that had the potential to enhance self understanding and understanding of human life; that it *did* help to widen and deepen the student's perspectives in ways that contributed to his or her human development; that it *could* be used in ways that fostered independent thought. The next section of this chapter will deal with phenomenology, illustrating its compliance with these criteria. However, it is informative to note Grimmitt's continued insistence on the justification of religious education in the school curriculum solely on educational grounds in his later writings.

In one of a series of published lectures given at the *Conference of the Australian Association of Religious Education* in 1978 (the series subsequently became the basis of his 1987 *Religious Education and Human Development*) Grimmitt developed his claims about the place and nature of knowledge about religions in the school curriculum. He claimed that a school curriculum was successful or otherwise to the extent that it set young people 'on the way to being receptive to the lessons to be learned from life; of being imaginative and creative in their responses to changing

personal circumstances' (Grimmitt, 1983, p. 14). The claim was based on a view of knowledge not as objective, fixed, external to the learner and grasped through the assimilation of a common culture, but as 'socially constructed, socially related and socially relative' (Grimmitt, 1983, p. 20). This concept of the hermeneutic between the learner, experience and received 'knowledge' is familiar to educators today, and in some areas of the curriculum it has profoundly affected pedagogy. However, Grimmitt proposed this view of knowledge as a social construct particularly in the context of knowledge about religion and religious education. The integration of 'received' knowledge into a personalised, constructed system of meaning that is the result of a dialectical process was described by Grimmitt in his way:

In a society such as ours, everyone has to cope with multiple realities, and reality is not adequately defined only by reference to forms of knowledge or disciplines. The Reality as a Social Construct thesis places Type A knowledge (received, fixed, objectively existing knowledge) *within* the framework of Type B knowledge (personally and socially constructed knowledge) where it exists alongside other realities, especially *personal and interpersonal realities*... Bringing the forms of knowledge within a framework of reality which is socially constructed does not rule out that such knowledge is objective, as compared with inter-personal or intra-personal knowledge which is subjective. It does however deny that such knowledge is absolute, and not subject or relative to the social processes that create it (Grimmitt, 1983, p. 23).

The dialectic between personal and social realities and objective or received knowledge is the basis of the pedagogical approach to religious education which Grimmitt first proposed in 1973, developed in his series of lectures in 1978, developed further in his 1987 *Religious Education and Human Development* and later in his explication of a social constructivist approach to religious education (Grimmitt, 2000). In 1987 he again questioned the rationalist view of knowledge that it has *intrinsic* worth. Rather, Grimmitt claimed, knowledge was valuable for its *instrumental* worth, for what it *does*. Similarly, education and the curriculum are valuable not for any intrinsic worth but for what they do, for their contribution to the goals of education (Grimmitt, 1987). For Grimmitt, the fundamental goal of education is human development in both its personal and social dimensions, and when taken seriously he claimed that this has profound implications for the choice of content and pedagogical approaches, a claim that has particular implications for religious education.

Phenomenology as a Partner in the Constructivist Pedagogy in Religious Education

The work of Ninian Smart (1968; 1974; 1978) in phenomenology as an approach in religious education came to the fore when the state schools of Britain needed an approach to the study of religion that was appropriate to the multicultural and

multi-faith community that Britain had become. The Butler Act of 1944 had made religious education compulsory in all state schools, and it was to be taught using an 'agreed syllabus' that would be developed under the authority of the Local Education Authority by all of the religious groups represented in the local area. John Hull (1984) has documented the history of the agreed syllabuses, showing that up to 1964 they concentrated on study of the past, particularly through the Bible and examples of exemplary Christian life. In the later 1960s a perusal of the agreed syllabuses revealed more understanding of the experiential dimension of religious education, but these still saw religious education essentially as education in and about Christianity. Hull (1984, p. 80) illustrated the changes that were coming when he quoted from the first of the Syllabi to attend to the multi-faith nature of the British community, the Bath Agreed Syllabus of 1970. 'The primary aim of religious education is to help young people to understand the nature of religion'.

The city of Birmingham was the first to develop a religious education syllabus that took account of the multi-religious nature of its population, allowing for breadth of studies of religions as they were represented in the local community, and also for a particular study of one religion if the population of the school required this. The revised Birmingham Syllabus of 1970 was extremely significant for its commitment to 'a religious education syllabus that would make a positive contribution to community relations in the city' (Hull, 1984, p. 87), and for the fact that there was a distinction made between the personal religious convictions of the teacher and the syllabus content. The Birmingham syllabus could be taught by any 'well informed teacher of good will, regardless of his faith, to any interested pupils, regardless of their faith' (Hull, 1984, p. 88). Hull went on to observe that, after this time, the agreed syllabi were never as influential as they had been, but, he claimed, they 'give official approval and recognition to trends already established' and 'register the climate of the subject and set out its norms' (1984, p. 91).

These trends and the climate of religious education in Britain in the 60s and 70s were significantly influenced by the work of Ninian Smart (1968; 1974; 1978) who advocated the study of religion as a means of gaining greater understanding of human experience and of the world in which we live, without 'interest in or intention of evangelising' (Lovat, 1995, p. 1). The eminent sociologist of religion, Durkheim (1976), had in the early twentieth century argued for the 'scientific or rational' (Nisbet, 1975, p. v) study of religion, applying scientific analysis to its origins, development, and practice from the perspective of an outsider. Smart took up this emphasis, and developed a phenomenological approach to the study of religion drawing on the philosophy of Husserl (1982), who advocated that any apprehension of the experience of being human, or of the world, must begin with 'the natural standpoint, from the world as it confronts us' (Husserl, 1982, p. xix). This apprehension of the world leads through description and analysis to *phenomenological reductions*, which observe the complex relationships between phenomena, and thus elucidate both the facts and the mystery of human life.

In 1958 Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* had claimed that religious consciousness or awareness of the sacred existed *a priori* in the human experience, that is that it

was a category of human experience, which ‘issues from the deepest foundation of cognitive apprehension that the soul possesses, ...it does not arise out of [the data of the natural world] but only by their means’ (Otto, 1958, p. 112). According to Otto, this category of the human condition could be studied, as it exists, through description and rigorous analysis. The contributions of Husserl and Otto led to the development of the study of religion as phenomenology (Eliade, 1958; Scheler, 1961; Hick, 1991) and to the work of Ninian Smart who was concerned with ‘trying to exhibit religion and religions through uncovering the anatomy of Religion’ (1973, p. 52). This descriptive, analytical study involved a ‘bracketing’ of one’s own religious assumptions in order to enter fully and appreciatively into the religious world of the other.

The phenomenological approach to the study of religion was extremely influential in Britain, and later in Europe and Australia, where it presented a non-judgmental way of studying religions as phenomena of human existence, and thus of contributing to greater understanding and tolerance of the religious groups within a local community. Within his frameworks of an educational justification for the study of religion in state schools, and knowledge as personally and socially constructed, Grimmitt adopted Smart’s view of religion as a phenomenon that could be studied though its dimensions—experiential, mythological, ritual, social ethical and doctrinal—as a partner in the dialectic that is religious education. Smart had always emphasised the implicit as well as the explicit aspects of religion, that is, the presentation of the dimensions of religion in order to bring out their meaning and value for devotees. Grimmitt’s pedagogy more clearly brought out this implicit aspect, and sought to relate religious phenomena to the life worlds of children and adolescents. He demonstrated this in 1973 with his proposal of life themes that he labelled *depth, symbol and language themes*, and *situation themes*, as able to converse with religious phenomena in a way that enabled the construction of meaning. In 1987 Grimmitt wrote:

Clearly in order to learn about religion one must investigate that part of the arena of faith responses which I have designated ‘traditional belief systems’ because it is in and through these that religious interpretations of meaning are made explicit in the social world. Equally, however, in order to appreciate the necessary relationship that religious faith responses have to everyday experiences of life, one must also investigate ‘shared human experience’ (Grimmitt, 1987, p. 204).

In 2000 Grimmitt again enunciated the dialectic between human experience and the content of religions, in his constructivist pedagogy of religious education.

- That the item of religious content is always brought into dynamic relationship with critical and reflective thought.
- That any communication of information about the item of religious content on the part of the teacher is always related to the constructions that pupils are using, applying and articulating

- That the sequence of learning is always from encouraging egocentric interpretations of experience within situated thought, through alternative conceptualised interpretations (as represented by interventions from pupils or teacher) to evaluative judgments about the interests which each interpretation serves and expresses (Grimmitt, 2000, p. 217).

Grimmitt's reasons for giving such prominence to the role of the other partner in the dialectic, the life world of the child or adolescent, is explored in the following section.

Why Emphasise Human Experience and Reflection?

In 1973, against the background of the 'God is dead' movement (Altizer & Hamilton, 1968; Van Buren, 1963) and the first serious attempts to de-mythologise Scripture especially through the Bultmann (1960; 1972) school, Grimmitt questioned the practice of teaching young people traditional Christian thought forms, without reference to the questions that arose from their human experience. Fundamental to this critique was the changing view of God that had arisen through the first half of the twentieth century, and especially the theology of Tillich (1969). Although Grimmitt pointed out that this theology was too complex to be used in the classroom, it gave direction to his emphasis on life questions as a partner in the dialectic about religious education. For Tillich (1969) God was not a removed being, external to human life and experience, and only able to be apprehended rationally (an emphasis that had marked a great deal of Christian theology). Instead God was 'depth'.

The name of this inexhaustible depth and ground of all being is God...translate it and speak of the depths of your life, of the source of your being, of your ultimate concern, of what you take seriously without reservation. Perhaps in order to do so you must forget everything traditional that you have learned about God, perhaps even the word itself. For if you know that God means depth, you know much about him (Tillich, 1969, p. 63).

In other words, the truth at the heart of any religion is disclosed in and through people's own experiences. This was true, Grimmitt claimed, even of traditional dogmas, for they are made valid only when the person apprehends that they point to, or 'square with or illuminate' (Grimmitt, 1973, p. 52) the person's experience. Any religious phenomena is only valid for the individual if it is able to speak directly to his or her existential situation. Herein lies the dialectic that is at the heart of religious education pedagogy. 'God is not 'out there'...he is the 'beyond in the midst of our life' (Robinson, 1963, p. 47). 'We need to realise that religious concepts only come alive when we are able to relate them sometimes partially, sometimes completely to our own experiences'. (Grimmitt, 1973, p. 52).

On the basis of this fundamental principle of pedagogy, in 1973 Grimmitt proposed approaching religious education through exploration of *depth themes* or themes that were in keeping with the cognitive developmental stage of the child.

In this 1973 publication Grimmitt drew on the cognitive development stage theory of Piaget (1969) and the religious stages nominated by Goldman (1968), for these stage theorists influenced education and religious education theory significantly at that time. Subsequent publications of Grimmitt's did not rely on stage theories. The themes explored the child's immediate situation, seeking to uncover the questions within it, and to bring these into conversation with what religious traditions know and teach about these questions. The exploration of depth themes encouraged what Grimmitt called the 'frontier questions' (Grimmitt, 1973, p. 56) and these provided the raw material from which religious concepts could emerge.

Illustrating Grimmitt's Pedagogical Approach

Grimmitt's 1973 book provided a list of possible depth themes for children from primary to secondary school. Some of these were *homes and families, people who help us, friends and neighbours, living in groups, things we like to do, highways and journeys, gifts and giving, books we like to read, experiences of awe, wonder, mystery, courage, sympathy, adventure, kindness, conflicts, disappointment, aggression*. The list of possible depth themes is very long since these relate specifically to common human experiences. Unlike the themes proposed by Goldman (1968) depth themes were not meant to bring the child to a particular religious position, but to provide the basis for working towards and exploring general 'religious' questions.

According to Grimmitt's 1973 schema, in the middle years of the junior school, *symbol and language themes* are introduced. These run parallel with *depth themes*, and they continue through senior primary and secondary school. *Symbol and language themes* grow out of *depth themes* and, in taking the initial questions further, they provide the language by which children can begin to understand religious concepts. So the *depth theme* about *things we like to make* used in the junior school may become for older children a *symbol and language theme* about creation. This theme may be brought into conversation with what different religions teach about creation, and how they understand the creator god and that god's relationship with creation. It may also incorporate further symbol and language themes such as water, desert, birth and re-birth, darkness and light, all of which will provide for further understanding of how these basic themes arise in the beliefs, stories, rituals, and experience of religious communities.

Situation themes, which grow from *depth* and *symbol and language* themes, are proposed for older children, senior primary through to senior secondary. These extend the terrain of religious education into moral, personal and social education. Situation themes may be *conflict in families, racial conflict, making decisions, how we should we live, values, etc.* A situation theme which may emerge from the *depth theme* of *things we like to make* and the *symbol and language theme* of *creation* may be *our responsibility to the world around us*. Such a situation theme, which extends learning about religions and their beliefs and rituals about creation into the area of moral education, may consider the responsibility of individuals and

groups to the environment, and may engage students in considering their own role in conservation. All themes are brought into conversation with appropriate content from world religions.

In his 1987 book *Religious Education and Human Development*, Grimmitt concentrated on religious education for adolescents. He summarised the theme approach as a dialectic between the *adolescent life world* (within the four key areas of family, local community, plural society and world wide community), and the *world of religions*. The knowledge skills and attitudes that are the outcomes of understanding religions and their place in everyday life were referred to by Grimmitt as 'abilities in pure religion' (Grimmitt, 1991, p. 77) and those that were the outcomes of the application of religious insights to personal, moral social development 'their frames of reference for viewing life and giving it meaning' were 'abilities in applied religion' (Grimmitt, 1991, p. 77). Therefore, themes such as *celebrations in the local community* will lead to examining the ways in which the religious groups within communities celebrate important festivals, and to knowledge of the stories, beliefs and symbols at the centre of the celebrations. Thus the adolescent's questions about living together in community, understanding other people, and the importance of community, are given a wider and deeper context. The themes deal with ultimate questions such as what is life about?, what do I believe?, what do I value?, how do I relate to my world?, how can I live in community?, and the questions are viewed in relation to the answers given to them by religions. Thus the students' questions are given content upon which they may be sharpened, with the result that new religious understanding is gained.

In his 2000 publication *Pedagogies of Religious Education* Grimmitt gave a verbatim account of the pedagogical approach. With a group of students he initiated questions about birth and death, the relationship of these two phenomena to each other, and about how life could be understood if it is just a process of moving towards death. The conversation with the students moved to issues of creation and destruction, and whether it is possible for human beings to improve their lives. Into the conversation Grimmitt introduced a photograph of a statue of Shiva as Nataraja, the Hindu dancing god. As Grimmitt explained to the students some of the concepts that surround belief in Shiva, especially the concepts of *maya*, *karma*, *samara* and *moksha*, are concepts which are related to key concepts about life and death from a Hindu perspective, and to the re-generation of life, rebirth and one's personal responsibility for one's actions. These were brought into dialogue with the ultimate questions that had begun the conversation, and the students were presented with one religious perspective on these questions.

So what is the truth about human life? The Hindu perspective provided material for the student to develop his or her perspective, so that at the end of the conversation there were new insights for the students, and perhaps new questions. The pedagogy may be summarised in Grimmitt's words:

In my work I have focused particularly on the importance of choosing religious subject-matter with the deliberate intention of providing an opportunity for reflection on, and re-evaluation and interpretation of, the self, and of devising

a pedagogy which brings the 'religious life world' and the 'adolescent life world' into a dialectical relationship as a means of promoting this (Grimmitt, 1991, p. 77).

Two Evaluations of Grimmitt's Work

Kalve (1996) has critiqued Grimmitt's work from the point of view of a theologian. First, he is uncomfortable with religious education being approached from a secular humanist viewpoint, and with the use of phenomenology as an organising structure for content. His objection is that, according to phenomenology, religions are to be treated as equal, recognising however their unique and distinct characteristics. They are valued not for themselves *intrinsically*, but for what they can *do* for the learner. However, Kalve (1996) argues, most religious believers would not want this. They see their religious tradition not only as unique but also as revelatory of the truth. Relativism towards the truth claims of religions is, according to Kalve, something religions would want to avoid.

Unfortunately Kalve cites only Grimmitt's 1987 publication *Religious Education and Human Development*. Had he gone back to the 1973 publication *What Can I Do in RE?* he would have found a justification for this equality of treatment of religions in a secular humanist approach to religious education. Here Grimmitt insisted that he was proposing a theory and pedagogy of religious education for state schools in a multi-faith community. He acknowledged that the needs and intentions of Churches and religious communities in religious education were different from those of a government in a secular society, needs and intentions that are translated through a state school system. It is hard to imagine any religious educator arguing that in a multi-faith community's state schools, preference should be given to any one religion. To criticise Grimmitt's secular humanist approach to religious education, as proposed for use in a secular humanist society, seems to miss the central point.

Secondly, Kalve (1996) applies a theologian's view to the themes or life questions part of Grimmitt's process. He claims that Grimmitt sees these ultimate questions as essential to the human condition, as human 'givens', and in the human 'givens' category, he puts the capacity to hold religious or other beliefs. Indeed, faith response, for Grimmitt (1987, pp. 90–92) is conditioned by the cultural form of religion that the person encounters. Kalve argues, however, that the presence of ultimate questions in the person's reflection on human life, and the capacity to enter into religious faith, are metaphysical capacities, that is, they derive from God and are directed towards God.

Kalve's critique of Grimmitt's work is an example of what happens when one approaches the work of another (or enters into the study of religion for that matter) without 'bracketing' one's own context, history, and assumptions. When this is not done, we have the result we find in Kalve's critique: an evaluation, which is heavily slanted towards the particular assumptions and worldview of the one doing the evaluating.

This having been said, Kalve would not have needed to look very far to find something of a theological justification for the human 'givens' in Grimmitt's work, albeit in an earlier work than the one he has cited almost exclusively. In his 1973 work Grimmitt did argue that life or ultimate questions arose from the depths of the person, and that the 'depth' within the person, according to Tillich (1969), was God. In that work Grimmitt seemed to take the theological view that the process of working towards meaning was a God-inspired one. Kalve may have been more favourably disposed towards Grimmitt's pedagogy had he analysed that particular view, which was not evident in later works of Grimmitt.

In a review that was largely favourable to *Religious Education and Human Development* (Grimmitt, 1987) Greer (1988) criticised Grimmitt's work on two grounds. The first was Grimmitt's (according to Greer) scarce attention to defining what he means by *spirituality*. Greer believed that in Grimmitt's work, the reader was left with 'a sense of uncertainty about the precise nature of the spiritual' (Greer, 1988, p. 12), and he cited Grimmitt's own uncertainty about where the personal, moral, religious meanings of ultimate questions are distinguishable from the spiritual meanings. Grimmitt was reluctant to delve into these distinctions, and tended to group the spiritual with the religious, moral and to some extent the personal. He is not alone in this, for the search to more clearly make these distinctions is, it could be argued, still in its early stages in educational research. However, the critique is a valid one. We cannot go to Grimmitt's work for a satisfactory definition of the spiritual, but it is the view of this author, at least, that this does not necessarily detract from the overall pedagogical approach. Most people today would still have difficulties in classifying the kind of ultimate questions with which Grimmitt works as personal, religious, moral or spiritual.

Greer's second criticism of Grimmitt is related to the way in which Grimmitt *distinguishes* and then, in his pedagogical approach, appears to *integrate* the forms of knowledge that he refers to as type A and type B (closed/externally verifiable knowledge and socially constructed knowledge), a distinction that has been made at some length earlier in his chapter.

'Grimmitt attempts to reconcile the two conflicting approaches to knowledge, but he does not do it as clearly as one might have wished' (Greer, 1988, p. 13). This author believes that there are no grounds for such criticism, and that Grimmitt's integration of the two forms of knowledge in a workable pedagogy is a particularly helpful part of what he has achieved. As shown earlier in this chapter, the integration of 'received' knowledge into a personalised, constructed system of meaning that is the result of a dialectical process is described by Grimmitt in his way:

The Reality as a Social Construct thesis places Type A knowledge (received, fixed, objectively existing knowledge) within the framework of Type B knowledge (personally and socially constructed knowledge) where it exists alongside other realities especially personal and interpersonal realities...Bringing the forms of knowledge within a framework of reality which

is socially constructed does not rule out that such knowledge is objective, as compared with inter-personal or intra-personal knowledge which is subjective. It does however deny that such knowledge is absolute, and not subject or relative to the social processes that create it (Grimmitt, 1983, p. 23).

It is difficult to see what there is about the explanation that Greer found unclear.

Conclusion

Michael Grimmitt has made an invaluable contribution to the discourse about religious education and its practice in a secular, multi-faith environment. While acknowledging the context for which it is intended, it is argued by this writer that Christian schools can also learn from Grimmitt's approach. His approach is not in conflict with certain tenets of Christian beliefs about revelation, and in his earlier work (1973) Grimmitt has linked ultimate questions with revelation and the revelatory process. He is in keeping with *Dei Verbum* (Abbott, 1966) here, which argues that one ground for revelation is the reality of creation and human life. Arguing as he does from a secular humanist perspective, Grimmitt would probably reject the view that his pedagogy could be of use to Christian schools who want to draw their content particularly but not exclusively from Christianity. Nevertheless, like all educational institutions, Christian schools must respect the religious freedom of the learner. The particular emphasis in Grimmitt's pedagogy on the reflection, judgement, thought processes, search for meaning and identity of the students, and the emphasis on religion being a tool for this, is not far from current thinking about religious education in Christian schools.

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THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DIMENSION TO THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM: A PERSPECTIVE ON ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM STUDIES

Graham Rossiter

Australian Catholic University, Sydney

Introduction

The question, 'How can the curriculum and teaching/learning processes promote the spiritual and moral development of pupils' has long been a concern for both public and independent schools in Western countries—even if in some situations the practical attention given to it has been minimal. The study of religion as a subject has been a prominent, and often the principal, expression of this concern, especially in religious schools; in public schools in different countries, the subject religion has had mixed fortunes.

How to address spiritual and moral dimensions across the whole school curriculum has had a chequered history. While the *intention* to do this has generally been regarded as important for education, there has not been enough coherent progression from intention to practice, even though there have been worthwhile developments. One reason for this gap between theory and practice is the naturally great complexity and understandable uncertainties in links between teaching practices and change in young people's attitudes, beliefs and values. In both intention and outcomes, to educate for 'personal change' is at a *different level* from educating in knowledge and skills; however, in terms of classroom interactions, education for personal change remains at the *same level* as any classroom teaching/learning. There is no quantum leap to 'personal learning', because even when teachers are aiming at personal change in students they cannot use anything more than the normal, day-to-day teaching/learning procedures. Teachers cannot 'change gear' on cue to a spiritual dimension of teaching that automatically engages students at a personal level. Personal change is influenced by many factors outside the classroom teaching/learning process; personal change has to come

freely from within the individual if it is to be authentic; if personal change is to have repercussions through an individual's personality, beliefs and behaviour, it is unlikely to happen 'then and there' in the classroom. It is, therefore, really more appropriate to use the phrase 'education that might *dispose* pupils towards personal change' as a more accurate acknowledgment of the intention, and hence a more realistic starting point for relevant practice.

Another influential reason for this gap between intentions and practice is that various conceptions of spiritual/moral education across the curriculum have not been cogent and realistic enough to win the wide support of teachers. The majority of teachers in a school may be sympathetic to the aim, but if they remain unconvinced that a program can be carried through in an effective way that harmonises with their experience of regular teaching/learning, then the implementation will fall short of what was expected. It may also be that the expectations for student personal change are too high. Perhaps it may be more realistic to ensure that the curriculum and the teaching processes are pointed in a 'healthy direction' for personal change rather than focus too much on actual personal change in students. This acknowledges that not all pupils will move in this direction, neither will they move at the same pace. But it will be important for educators to know that they are doing their best to provide the educational environment, the values orientation, the content and process that can facilitate any movement in pupils' personal development.

Different across-curriculum approaches have been tried. One was to see how learning areas like English, History, Science and others could promote some form of spiritual learning in pupils. Some generic approaches, each with its own constructs and language, have also addressed this question: values/moral education, values across the curriculum, values infusion, holistic education, spiritual education, personal development, life skills, citizenship education, and character education. In addition there is the suggestion of some spiritual learning in psychological and/or learning theories that impinge on educational practice, such as multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence, left/right brain learning, spiritual intelligence, lifelong learning, constructivist theory and the like.

This chapter does not set out to add another new approach to this list. However, it will propose a perspective that could be useful itself as a strategy, as well as being able to enhance the various approaches listed above. It suggests that use of the constructs 'meaning', 'identity' and 'spirituality' can help educators to make their across-the-curriculum teaching more relevant to the spiritual and moral development of pupils—and in ways that do not compromise the integrity of their subject teaching. A variety of constructs (like culture, citizenship, values, character, virtues, etc.) could be used as study themes for promoting pupil personal development; but meaning, identity and spirituality have a contemporary relevance that makes their use particularly helpful for young people. In addition, these constructs are valuable within religious education.

This chapter serves to introduce the argument as to how the three constructs can be used effectively. This is the first step in an ongoing research project that is

giving more detailed attention to their educational potential: that includes studies of the nature, psychological function and modes of communication of meaning, identity and spirituality, with special attention to their role in youth spiritual and moral development.

Search for Meaning

Don't talk to me about life's seasons. Don't ask me for answers, don't ask me for reasons.

I don't want to hear; Don't want to hear it at all.

From the moment we're born we start to die; And a man can go crazy if he keeps askin' why.

That's just how it is. Don't look for a reason at all.

[But] There must be a reason. There must be a way, to make some sense of it;

To try to find a reason for it all.

We're not born just so we can die. There must be an answer, and we've got to try;

To make some sense of it. To try to find a reason for it all.

Eric Bogle

In a song called *A Reason for it All*, written in the late 1980s, Scottish/Australian musician Eric Bogle expressed the anxiety people can feel about meaning and purpose in life; they can sense they are caught between feelings of despair that there may be no meaning to life, and a desire to find explanations and answers to bewildering events and experiences. They need some interpretation of what is going on in their lives and in the world that helps them cope and plan a hopeful future.

For many, especially youth, religion—a traditional source of meaning, values and purpose—does not have the same cogency or credibility it seemed to have in the past. In contemporary Western societies the pluralism and pace of life have affected the ways in which communities (even families) used to serve as frames of reference for beliefs and values. With an ever increasing emphasis on individualism and the 'good life', many do not bother to look for guidance from the traditional support structures for meaning which seem to offer few options; their interests and needs are many and varied; they may be so busy enjoying themselves and/or working so hard that they give little thought to an overall meaning to their lives. For them, alienation from, or lack of interest in, traditional life meanings embedded in religions and social institutions present no problems.

Then, at certain times or in particular situations, people can wonder and worry about meaning. With few links to traditional sources of meaning, or because they have despaired of their relevance, these people can feel more on their own in their search for a view of life that will sustain them. They do not appear to get much outside help when constructing a personal meaning system; but they

may pragmatically pick up and use readily available meanings from the popular culture—even if these are damaging in the long term.

The reasons people do or do not think about meaning in life are many and complex. The poor, and those caught up in violent or traumatic situations, often do not have the luxury to devote time to pondering questions of meaning; they are preoccupied with basic survival. At the other extreme are those who appear to get by quite well without giving much attention to ultimate meaning for their lives; they are self-centred, preoccupied with their own pleasure, comfort and needs, and not much concerned about contributions to the community; *de facto*, this articulates an implied individualistic meaning. Between these extremes, there is considerable variation in the extent to which people cultivate personal meaning in life, as well as much variation in the content of their meanings and in its consequences for the way they conduct themselves.

This chapter proposes that in education a value position needs to be taken on the question of meaning. It presumes that a need for meaning and purpose is a defining characteristic of the human being. Communities of meaning—family, religion, other groups and the State—have a role in communicating a basic set of meanings to the next generation in ways that respect the emerging personal autonomy and individuality of young people. The notion of a ‘healthy’ meaning in life is an important one for communities to develop to guide their care for the young and to inform the goals of education. Use of the word ‘healthy’ as a qualifier of meaning needs further clarification. It is not just a ‘useful’, ‘serviceable’ or even a ‘plausible’ meaning that communities want to communicate to the next generation; it needs to be a meaning that is more than utilitarian—that includes criteria and principles for judging what is good or harmful. And it needs to be judged by the community as the best it can offer young people; it needs to be good for them; and judged to be a good expression of the community’s tradition of meaning. This requires an articulation of the basic meanings the young would need to feel that they are an accepted and secure part of their community; this gives them a ‘starting’ interpretation of life and reference points for cultural identity—a working theory, that could sustain their needs for values and purpose, which would be confirmed or modified later as they grew to maturity and took on more personal responsibility for their own meaning and purpose.

Communities and families could see their fundamental shared meanings as a cultural inheritance that needs to be available to the young to help them start their life journeys. If it is presumed that a search for meaning and values is a life long task, then individuals need some initial nourishment in meaning and identity to get them started when they are children.

Many will agree that young people need initial help with information and skills for defining meaning for their lives. But when it comes to spelling out what this means, especially what particular meanings need to be communicated, almost inevitably there will be different estimates of what is required. As far as school education is concerned there is a need for communities to have some discerning process in place to address this problem (this applies both to religious

and government schools). When the content is naturally more controversial, as in meanings, beliefs and values, it will be more difficult to come to a consensus. Such a discernment should examine not only the content of meanings for the school curriculum, but also the critical skills needed for the identification and evaluation of meaning; a notion of 'healthy meaning' needs to be developed for informing this process.

So far attention has been given to a place of religion and beliefs in the curriculum in a general way as would be appropriate for the study of meaning in public education. To ignore the study of religion in public schools would be to compromise the range of cultural meanings that should be accessed by young people in the educational context. However, this issue has to take into account different national contexts for the study of religion in public education. There are often one or both of two different forms of religious education that operate in public schools: *Denominational*, conducted for denominational groupings by religious representatives coming into the schools; and *General*, taught by regular public school teachers as part of the ordinary curriculum. The proposals here are regarded as just as pertinent to both of these forms.

When the question of religious meanings in the curriculum of religious schools is addressed from the standpoint of a community of faith it is appropriate to include religious activities as well as content in theology, scripture and so on as part of the meanings of that faith tradition. But even in the context of a community of faith (and the religious school is not the same type of community of faith as a local church or synagogue), religious belief cannot be 'injected' at will into the next generation. The young can be socialised into the basic meanings and practices of their religious tradition from an early age, both in the family and in a local community of faith, and to some extent in a school. But whether or not they will become actively involved in organised religion will eventually be a matter of their own choice. It is evident that in secularised Western societies like Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and European countries, many young people are only nominally connected with their religious tradition. Nevertheless, whether or not they become practising members it is argued that educational access to their cultural religious heritage can make a valuable contribution to their personal development.

One final word here about the evaluation of meaning. While the contemporary search for meaning is often said to be difficult for young people, there is no shortage of meanings available in society. The world is awash with meanings suggesting how people should live their lives. In Western countries this is amplified by the media, especially film and television, where consumerism is all pervasive—this can even give an impression that meaning and satisfaction in life revolve around what one can buy. Some young people feel that they are wading through a virtual miasmal swamp of ideas about what it means to be alive, unique and independent. Identifying implied meanings that are being proposed and judging their appropriateness and contribution to well-being are therefore important skills that the young need to develop. The evaluation of meaning may ultimately be more pertinent than the concept 'search' for meaning. This is where education is important.

Identity

A research consultation with youth in Australia in 1998 reported that three major concerns of young people today were unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, and identity and the search for meaning (Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace, 1998, p. 1). Though not seeming as immediately pressing as the problems of unemployment and drug and alcohol abuse, the need for young people to find ways of making meaning in their lives and developing an authentic sense of self are matters of great concern to them. While meaning and identity are felt to be important, and are bound up with their attempts to make sense of the world and plot a hopeful path for their own lives, they may have vague, confused, but emotionally charged ideas of what these concepts mean. In addition, they are not sure of where to look for help, and they are not confident that adult institutions understand their questions, let alone have satisfying answers. As the report noted above went on to say: 'Many young people talk of lacking purpose and meaning in life. They often lack helpful role models, feeling that the world in which they live bears little or no resemblance to that from which their parents emerged' (Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace, 1998, p. 15). In a changing social, economic and familial landscape many of the support networks that existed for past generations are no longer there, or, if present, they appear irrelevant.

In the paragraph above, it is suggested that young people's interest in identity is often personal and psychological. On the other hand, the focus of community interest in identity is often sociological; the concern is to hand on some of the distinguishing characteristics of the community—ethnic and religious identities in particular—and there is an interest in working out what contribution education can make to the process.

Identity is acknowledged as important in personal and social development. However, what it means and how it develops are complex and controversial. For example, identity can be invoked to justify a wide range of action, from support for a local football team to the extremes of ethnic cleansing. There is a close association between perceptions of identity and violence. Clarification of what identity means and how it can be addressed in education should be important community concerns. As for the construct meaning, it is considered that developing the notion of 'healthy identity' is important and useful for working out educational implications.

The working definition of identity found to be useful for educational purposes interprets identity as a process in which individuals draws on both internal and external cultural resources for self understanding and self expression.

Spirituality

The constructs 'spirituality' and 'identity' have been bracketed with meaning because it is considered both important and useful for contemporary education to address this trio in an integrated way. All of the three constructs are relevant to human development. Hence, as might be expected, they figure in the social sciences.

They are becoming more important in education. But all of them are notoriously difficult to define. Their definition will not be debated here in any detail. But some clarification of their meaning is essential if they are to be used constructively in educational theory and practice (this continues as part of the ongoing research noted at the beginning of the chapter). The ultimate educational purpose is to use these constructs (and related personal development themes) for heuristic purposes to identify and analyse issues; to stimulate interest in furthering investigations; to encourage learning; to discover, understand and solve problems; and to provide explanatory interpretations.

Traditionally, the word spirituality has had a religious connotation—the style of prayer and spiritual practice that expresses a religious faith and a religious perspective on life. But now, in addition to this religious usage, the word spirituality has been selected by others precisely to avoid the religious connotation. Religiosity and spirituality are not co-extensive, even though for religious people there is considerable overlap. Spirituality has become an ubiquitous term covering many different personal aspects of life and culture; it is used in traditional religions, as well as in new religious movements and non-religious spiritual groups; it also figures in areas as diverse as ecology, new age, healing, health sciences, social sciences, business and education.

A definition of spirituality needs to be broad enough to allow for a religious contribution, as well as acknowledging a spiritual dimension to living that includes personal aspects, values and aesthetic concerns; this allows the construct to negotiate both traditional interests and new developments. This is useful for three reasons. Firstly, in Western societies, religion is not prominent in the lives of many people; secularisation is at a ‘high water mark’. Hence, a spiritual education, if it is to enhance the personal development of individuals and be of wider benefit in the community, has to do more than meet the needs of those who are active members of a local religious group. This applies particularly to young people, many of whom construct a spirituality without much reference to organised religion. While young people are not so likely to use the word spirituality with reference to their aspirations in life, they tend to have more affinity with the word ‘spiritual’ than with ‘religion’.

Secondly, I do not want to discount the special interest that religion has long held in spirituality, nor underestimate the valuable contribution that a study of religion can make to young people’s education; it is of national importance to see how religious education in all school types can contribute to the spiritual and moral development of young people.

Thirdly, by using a language of spirituality that is not limited to the religious there is a better chance of articulating the spiritual and moral dimensions to general education. In liberal democratic societies there is debate about the place of religion in public education. In the United Kingdom, religious education in the curriculum is required by law. In the United States, law requires that religion is strictly kept out of the curriculum (Moran, 1978, p. 65). In Australia, a church sponsored religious education is permitted in limited circumstances in the state schools; legally, a more general study of religion taught by departmental teachers is allowed, but has never

developed successfully in the public schools, even though such programs, designated as state 'religion studies' courses, have been taken up by church-related schools, especially the Catholic schools. However, debate about a place for a study of religion in school education does not cover adequately the more general concerns about spirituality, values and ethics in the curriculum. Here, the language of spirituality, and of moral/values education, provides a more appropriate discourse for working out these concerns.

Interrelationships Between Meaning, Identity and Spirituality

As the constructs meaning, identity and spirituality are explored, it will become more clear that they are not distinct. There is considerable overlap and many interrelationships. In some instances meaning and identity are the same reality interpreted from different perspectives. I do not anticipate resolving all definitional difficulties. Even though there may remain some rough edges and potential inconsistencies with use of the terms, there is value and utility in trying to clarify meaning for the three constructs, and in exploring how they offer valuable insights for the spiritual and moral dimensions to school education.

The Socio-Cultural Situation and the Contemporary Search for Meaning, Identity and Spirituality

The social situation in which young people find themselves makes the search for meaning, identity and spirituality a difficult task. Their life environment does not seem as secure and purposeful as perhaps it was for their parents' generation. Beliefs about life's meaning and purpose drawn from religious convictions no longer seem to hold true. In an environment flooded with ways to make meaning and to find our 'true selves' there is an urgent need to help young people learn how to think more carefully and critically about issues in meaning, identity and spirituality.

On one hand, life expectations in Western countries have never been higher—that is, if you believe all you see on television. There are so many possibilities offered, and images of the good life abound. People are constantly bombarded with materially seductive images in print, advertising billboards, radio, film and television. 'The world is your oyster!' The impression given is that with the right consumer goods in hand (with the right brand labels), life is there for the taking. 'Just do it!' Freedom and individuality are 'worshipped'. Any suggestion that life needs altruism, values, commitments, and fidelity, let alone some sacrifices, is notable by its absence. Perhaps it is easy to get the impression that life can be lived without them.

While young people can feel these expectations vividly in their own imaginations, their real life experience is often in stark contrast with what they want. No matter how hard they try, they can never look as attractive as the marketing models or stars who seem to set the standards of beauty and desirability towards which all

aspire. Satisfying personal relationships are not just there to pick up like goods from a supermarket, and finding a good job and career can be fraught with failure, disappointment and self-doubt.

When they look at what is happening in the world, they find little there to encourage hope. One education document offered the following sociological analysis. While young people would probably not diagnose the situation in these same terms, many would have a vivid awareness of these problems impinging on their hopes for the future.

On the threshold of the third millennium education faces new challenges which are the result of a new socio-political and cultural context. First and foremost, we have a crisis of values which, in highly developed societies in particular, assumes the form, often exalted by the media, of subjectivism, moral relativism and nihilism. The extreme pluralism pervading contemporary society leads to behaviour patterns which are at times so opposed to one another as to undermine any idea of community identity. Rapid structural changes, profound technical innovations and the globalisation of the economy affect human life more and more throughout the world. Rather than prospects of development for all, we witness the widening of the gap between rich and poor, as well as massive migration from underdeveloped to highly developed countries. The phenomena of multiculturalism and an increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is at the same time an enrichment and a source of further problems (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1999, p. 1).

What is particularly problematic is the new prominence of nihilistic thinking—a tendency to believe there is no meaning to life. This can coexist with a very pragmatic, existential and materialistic outlook. Having nothing much to believe in or hope for can contribute to increasing levels of boredom, depression, drug and alcohol abuse and suicide, especially among youth.

This situation creates anxiety for adults, let alone young people. It makes the search for meaning, identity and spirituality difficult for all. This is the situation that families and communities have to address, trying to make some sense of it so they can guide children and young adults in charting a hopeful path forward.

Education and ‘Reasons for Living’

It is presumed that education is not the primary means of resolving the social problems noted above, but what it can do well is help young people become more well informed, and learn how to think critically about the contemporary socio cultural situation and about spiritual and moral issues. It can help them discern the shaping influence of culture on beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. It can help them learn how to become critical interpreters and evaluators of culture. It cannot automatically make them wise, but it can point them in the direction of wisdom.

A key to this constructive role for education is evident in the song quoted at the beginning of this chapter, *Reasons for Living*. Fundamental to education is the appeal to reason. Enhancing the capacity to think is central to the notion of education. Also, given the malaise in meaning that young people are experiencing, and given the negative feelings many of them have about finding a satisfactory purpose in life and achieving some authentic identity, there is a need to get them to consider positive reasons for living. Education can provide a valuable forum in which young people are able to consider constructive, positive community interpretations of life as well as diagnoses of current social problems. The emphasis should be on student-centred study and research. The educational process needs to be a dialogical study, avoiding a one-way adult communication of the normative views and values of the older generation. But neither should it neglect normative community views. It must therefore be directed at the 'meaning' of issues, at values and principles, and not just at descriptions and facts. As well as educating the young in the critical evaluation of meaning and identity, such study can provide resources from which young people can derive some working interpretations of present situations, and positive meanings for life.

This proposal is likely to make sense to those involved in religious education, because this area of curriculum has long been concerned with spirituality. However, while it may sound attractive to educators, it is likely to be perceived by many as unrealistic and inappropriate for general education. There is an important challenge in arguing a case for this spiritual/moral role for general education, and to propose realistic ways in which it might be incorporated into learning and teaching.

Over the past thirty years government documentation on the aims and purposes of schooling has increasingly given attention to the role of education in promoting the spiritual and moral development of young people. For example, in 1990 the following aims statement appeared in the New South Wales Government White Paper on education in state schools:

Values and Education: The moral, ethical and spiritual development of students is a fundamental goal of education. It is clearly not confined to one area of the curriculum. *All* teachers, across *all* areas of the curriculum, have a responsibility to inculcate in their students positive values and a capacity for moral and ethical judgment. Government schools should actively promote the moral values which are shared by the majority of people in our community. There is merit in the clear statement of this responsibility. In particular, this document will give greater emphasis to the link between education, work and personal fulfilment, as well as encouraging imagination, creativity, excellence and the search for meaning and purpose in life. It will give more recognition to the place of the family and family values in our society and the rights and responsibilities of parents in the area of morals and values. Greater stress will be placed on students achieving high standards of self-discipline, personal conduct and social responsibility. As recommended...the document will also acknowledge the importance of all students developing spiritual values (Metherell, 1990, p. 2).

Statements like this provide a mandate for spiritual and moral education in schools, both government and non-government. This is a very positive development. However, such statements create great problems for educators because there remains a significant gap between aims and practice. The idea of all teachers across all curriculum areas being involved in some form of spiritual/moral education is at first sight fanciful to say the least. The challenge is to interpret this role in a modest, realistic way that clarifies what teachers can do as a natural part of their teaching/learning procedures without compromising the integrity of their given subject matter and academic discipline. If this is not done in a cogent way it is unlikely that such statements about values in education will win the support of educators. However, an even more telling factor for teachers, particularly in public schools, is the fear that such involvement would arouse controversy, while they had no security in support from school and school system authorities for their exercise of professional judgment in a values education role. A mandate for values education in aims statements is one thing, but if this is not followed through to a mandate at school and local community level, with clearly stated implications for content, method and teaching ethics, then it is unlikely that teachers would feel confident enough to proceed. Hence the need is urgent for a public endorsement at school level of the intention to engage in across-the-curriculum spiritual education, together with a realistic account of how this could be implemented.

A need to clarify the spiritual and moral dimensions to the whole school curriculum in a practicable way is thus a very important current task for education. If not, then the valuable spiritual/moral thrust in recent aims documents will dissipate. Worse still, if these more personal, holistic and humanistic aims for education are surrendered because they could not be realistically translated into practice, it will be even easier for the more pragmatic, economic and employment oriented goals of education to dominate education even more than they do now.

The Role for School Education in Relation to Young People's Search for Meaning, Identity and Spirituality

Educational efforts to enhance meaning, identity and spirituality in young people do not have the same sorts of neat, credentialed outcomes as there are for regular subjects in the school curriculum. While there are knowledge and skills involved, and while the use of reason is crucial, the *hopes* are for some first steps in personal change. However, no educational program can automatically change young people personally, let alone benchmark such change with specified personal outcomes. Wisdom and values cannot be communicated like knowledge of facts. Educational experience can point young people in the desired direction, but a free personal response is an essential part of any authentic personal change. Nevertheless, these hopes are important for guiding the work of teachers; they help give direction and focus to the ways teachers address issues related to meaning, identity and spirituality, helping them see when and where they can make constructive contributions; they affect the language, concepts and questions used to do this.

There are some subjects whose content naturally allows for a study of meaning, identity and spirituality, like religious education, religion studies and personal development education.

However, this chapter is particularly interested in what might be done across the whole school curriculum to enhance the personal development of young people. This is a more difficult problem to address. A useful starting point has been to ask why a number of the efforts to promote spiritual and moral development through across-the-curriculum strategies have not achieved the level of success that their promotion would have implied—even though they were proposed as ‘core’ or ‘fundamental’ to the curriculum. The main problem has been that, while the intentions were noble, and while it was comparatively easy to make a list of desirable values and attitudinal outcomes, there has been a significant gap between the educational intentions and the actual teaching practice. Programs in religious schools with intentions like ‘values across the curriculum’, ‘values education’ and ‘values infusion’ have not often got to the stage of winning substantial teacher support, let alone achieving effective implementation (some would say that they did not even manage to get an adequate level of teacher understanding, but this was not because of any intellectual inability on the part of teachers, but because of naivety in their conceptualisation). These programs each came with a framework that did not adequately fit the realities of the classroom learning environment as teachers experienced them, even though their protagonists believed that they should. They were perceived by teachers as an ‘extra dimension’ imposed on what they were already doing. Teachers felt that authorities were trying to ‘inject’ a spiritual/moral role into their teaching of a secular curriculum, and that this compromised the integrity of their subject matter and academic discipline. They naturally tended to resent being told that they must do this over and above what they were already doing. In any case, they were not trained for moral or spiritual education. Most teachers are not opposed to the idea of promoting student personal/spiritual development across the curriculum. But they considered that the official line for these programs gave them a status and a pre-eminence that were unrealistic; their proposed importance, and the extent of the values outcomes, were out of proportion with what teachers knew was achievable in the classroom. In turn, teachers became sceptical of programs that had an almost ‘propaganda’ like feel to them; there was an apparent ‘values overkill’.

The first step in approaching meaning, identity and spirituality across the curriculum is realism in acknowledging the limited role of the school in bringing about personal change in young people. This means accepting that the development of meaning, identity and spirituality are extraordinarily complex, influenced by many factors. Understanding the modest role of the school is the starting point for planning the valuable, realistic and effective contribution that the school curriculum can make to the personal and spiritual development of young people. For example, we know that we can successfully teach a young person quantum physics; but we cannot teach her/him not to take drugs! As long as educators and others use exactly the same language when they talk about ‘teaching values’ as they do about ‘teaching mathematics and English’, then they will continue to grossly overestimate the

school's capacity to promote the personal/spiritual development of young people, and, regretfully, this will further inhibit the valuable but limited contribution that the school can make.

Caution has been recommended to avoid unrealistic expectations of what the school might achieve in enhancing young people's meaning, identity and spirituality. Adding yet another program with this as the new title would not be the answer. Education has long suffered from the way that schools have been expected to solve social problems through the introduction of specific programs (e.g., with program titles like Peace, Citizenship, Values, Work, Leisure, Driving, Conflict Resolution, AIDS, etc.). This comment is made while acknowledging that such programs have made useful contributions.

It is proposed that content on meaning, identity and spirituality can be studied both in subjects like religion and personal development, as well as in other learning areas across the curriculum. How the study is conducted and how the students are engaged are all important. However, the principal thrust of this chapter proposes that the most appropriate long term approach to the promotion of meaning, identity and spirituality for young people in school is not necessarily to create specific curriculum space for the study of 'new' content. Rather, it is more important to educate teachers in terms of their own grasp of issues in meaning, identity and spirituality. If they can develop a more extensive and more sophisticated understanding of the issues they will be better able to bring this into their teaching/learning interactions with students in a natural way. Teachers need logical categories, language and concepts that can help young people identify and explore meaning and identity related issues. These issues are there, embedded in many of the topics now studied in different subjects; they do not have to be introduced from outside. There is a sizeable amount of content in the curriculum already that is naturally related to meaning, identity and spirituality, if handled appropriately. But it takes well informed and skilled teachers to be able to ask the telling questions, provide relevant information, comment on examples, refer to pertinent anecdotes and give vital leads to young people that can engage them in thinking about and debating these issues, and, hopefully, in considering the implications for their own personal lives.

The Importance of Teachers' Understanding of Meaning-Spirituality-Identity Related Issues

It is suggested here that the first and most important step is to enrich teachers' understanding of the human search for meaning, identity and spirituality, especially as it applies to the young. They also need to be convinced that their teaching has a valuable capacity to promote young people's education in this area, and contribute in some way to their personal/spiritual development. This presumes that if teachers themselves are well educated in this area they should have enough personal and professional wisdom to do something constructive about it in their own teaching, when and where this is appropriate. There will be places in the curriculum where spiritual and moral material is the formal content of study (e.g., religious

education). However, a holistic education would not quarantine the investigation of spiritual/moral dimensions to one particular subject. Hence the importance of educating teachers to address, and not to avoid, value sensitive issues that emerge in various classroom studies across the curriculum. The issues are already there, perhaps just beneath the surface; they need to be identified and considered with the students in a challenging way, without doing this excessively and distorting the study. Just to identify the emerging spiritual/moral issues is in itself a valuable exercise. Otherwise, there is a danger that this dimension is excluded *de facto*. This could give an impression that school education consciously ignores those issues, or, worse, that they are not worth considering.

This approach may be more helpful for promoting the spiritual/moral dimension of school education across the curriculum than providing teachers with a 'how to do it' manual. It is not so much *adding* to teachers' moral responsibilities, but enriching their teaching. It is bringing the naturally embedded spiritual/moral dimension to the surface appropriately. It can empower teachers to deal with this important dimension as a normal part of good education. There are other issues to be considered; for example, the educative place of teachers' own personal views and commitments, and a code of teaching ethics. Also, some attention to 'how to do it' is still important for teachers who may not see how a study of spiritual/moral issues can be woven into their teaching in a seamless way.

An Education that can Promote Meaning, Identity and Spirituality

The principal task addressed in this chapter is to develop a workable theory for promoting the spiritual and moral development of young people through across-the-curriculum studies (and especially through religious education). In this task, the students' experience and perspective must not be neglected. It has already been noted that young people are interested in spiritual and moral issues; they search for values and an authenticity in personal identity. However, this does not mean that they will automatically be interested in an education that sets out to help them in this quest. Rather, there is a strange and complex irony. Often, the very studies that purport to give special attention to meaning, identity and spirituality have their personal relevance subverted; students are uninterested.

Much of the high esteem for school education that has grown during this first century of compulsory schooling has come from the certification of achievement. Knowledge and skills achievements are benchmarked. Certificates are essential for entrance to further education and employment. The outcomes movement has given special attention to employment-oriented competencies. All of this influences what is called the 'mark status' of different subjects. Subjects that are more specifically concerned with personal development (Religion, or Ethics) had no such tangible or employment-related outputs. Teachers and parents may have vocally supported the ideals of a holistic education, and the importance of spiritual/moral studies, but this is usually not seen as important by students. For example, despite the official high profile of religious education in church-related schools, many students have a poor

regard for it. Even where students like the subject, they felt it has little relevance to their lives or future employment. The emergence of accredited state religion studies courses for senior classes in Australian schools has improved the academic status of religious education, but it has not solved the problem. Students can be expected to bring to religious education the same level of disinterest in religion common in contemporary society.

This problem is not limited to religious education. Studies in personal development in government schools have similar difficulties. For example, in New South Wales, when personal development studies were programmed into seminars on the last few days of the school year, the low status and perceived irrelevance of the work were amplified by the hidden curriculum—the school treated personal development studies as a nominal, peripheral requirement.

Finally, there is another influential element in students' negative perceptions of spiritual/moral studies which is difficult to counteract. They have an innate resistance to being told what to do in their own lives! Any school study to do with values, beliefs and behaviour can only too easily be perceived as an exhortation, and this is enough for them to keep the study at 'arms length'. This tendency militates against even the minimal level of intellectual engagement that is usually taken for granted in regular subjects. It underlines the importance of making any spiritual/moral studies an open, inquiring, student-centred learning process. Any approach that remotely resembles an exhortation from authority runs the risk of relegation to the 'irrelevant basket'. This is a natural problem that religious education in a church-related school has to acknowledge and address.

A Spiritual/Moral Dimension to Good Teaching

Teachers need to be wise enough to be able to prompt students to *attend to the greater meaning of what they are studying*; in other words, to take (and not overlook) the opportunity to see that there is much personal meaning to be considered in the issues that arise in their studies. At this point it will help to illustrate with examples. In a senior English literature/poetry study, students may study the theme 'changing self'. A teacher could ensure that all of the structural requirements in the unit were attended to, but a good teacher, who understands some of the complexities in developing a sense of self, could help students to see how the feelings, thinking and behaviour of the characters in the texts were not all that dissimilar from those people encounter in day-to-day life. The teaching/learning process does not consciously probe for personal responses from the students; rather, it *externalises* the personal issues and complexities by teasing them out from the text. In the safe area of textual interpretation the students identify and reflect on what has prompted change in the protagonists in the texts. If done well, this allows *emotional resonance* with the characters. Students can come face to face with matters and questions such as: 'personal change is complex and people do not always understand until later (and perhaps not even then) that some decisions lead to irrevocable changes in personal

relationships'; 'to what extent do people have control over change in their lives?'; 'what external factors bring about personal change?'; 'what is involved in progress from childhood to maturity?'

It is not difficult for young people to think of comparisons with their own life experience. Teacher comments, questions and examples can help students with the textual interpretation. How the study might affect them personally is usually better left to their own reflection, even though occasionally they will talk about this in class. Personal impact should not be judged by the apparent depth of personal interactions in the classroom. Nevertheless, at a later stage outside the classroom, it is not uncommon for teachers to find some students saying that they liked that study because it gave them something to think about at a personal level.

While English studies such as 'Changing self' tend to focus on identity from a psychological perspective, another study (often used in the New South Wales curriculum) called 'Power play' looks at the dynamics of personal power and politics. This kind of study leads to reflection on social and political issues. Yet another English study 'In the wild' examines writers' depictions of the conflict that has arisen from the ways in which humankind has perceived its provenance over the natural world. It shows what can happen when humans do not take environmental responsibility seriously.

Studies such as these (that can be paralleled in other subject areas in the curriculum) have the capacity to become *windows on contemporary life*, sensitising students to seeing things differently in their own experience, helping them become better interpreters of both meaning in the texts and meaning in their own personal experience. Without doubt, where teachers can do this they are educating their students in the spiritual and moral layers of life. But what is most important is that they are just being good teachers in their own subject area; they are attending to its natural spiritual/moral dimensions. This is not a separate layer of moral education added to their teaching from outside like a superstructure. It is not asking teachers to go beyond normal teaching requirements, and it is not 'adding' spiritual material to the curriculum. What it is expressing is a holistic education. It is fostering what might be called *personal learning*.

How much of this kind of teaching and learning is needed across the curriculum? This is a matter that needs careful attention, and it has to do with the overall personal relevance of the curriculum. In a subject area like religion or personal development there should be a significant amount of value-related content. In secular subjects, if attention to spiritual/moral dimensions is to be a natural part of the teaching, then attempts to do this excessively would be counterproductive and would undermine the integrity of the principal subject matter. These subjects have a coherence in their intended knowledge and skills outcomes. Some parts of the content may occasion personal learning by students, but much of it may not. Personal relevance is not an element that can be readily or easily injected. So, the short answer to the 'how much' question is 'occasionally'. This is consistent with the view that the school has a limited capacity to bring about personal change in young people.

The more insight teachers have into the development of meaning, identity and spirituality, the better equipped and more sensitive they will be in leading interpretative studies of value related questions where these emerge in the curriculum. In turn this can increase the potential of these studies for being personally relevant to the students. While such studies are ‘searching’ and not confrontative, they can challenge young people to expand their own understanding of meaning and identity related issues, sharpening their focus on the factors and questions that impinge on their own personal development, and on their physical and social environment. Articulating this spiritual/moral role for teaching across the school curriculum will help in refining the aims for school education that give more attention to the personal development of young people.

Summary: Characteristics of School Education that Enhance Meaning, Identity and Spirituality

This discussion does not see *education in meaning, identity and spirituality* as yet another subject addition to an already crowded school curriculum. Rather, if this phrase is to be used, then it should list aspects that could be implemented in various ways in different subjects across the curriculum in a holistic way—like a template to highlight the spiritual and moral dimensions.

The principal concerns are summarised here in three clusters:

- the responsibility of communities to give young people adequate educational access to their traditions of meaning, identity and spirituality—the content is like spiritual resources for personal development;
- the development of an understanding of the process of construction of meaning, identity and spirituality across the life cycle, and an appreciation of the psychological and social functions of meaning and identity;
- the acquisition of skills in the identification and evaluation of meaning, identity and spirituality, in the light of community values.

An holistic education should address these concerns. In proposing a role for school education in meaning, identity and spirituality I do not want to give an impression that education is the principal means of communicating these to the young. Family and cultural experience are considerably more influential. What needs to be stressed are the ways in which education can enhance personal meaning and identity, and how it can help young people think more critically about how these are communicated and developed. A shorthand for all of this is an education that explores reasons for living. This proposes that people’s meaning/spirituality/identity will be more healthy and constructive if it is open to educational improvement, particularly through the use of reason.

The opportunity for the school curriculum to actually bring about personal change in young people is limited. This revolves around helping them learn how to become well informed and think critically, and it educates them to learn better from their

own experience. Hopefully, they can identify wise traditions from the past, as well as being able to make thoughtful appraisals of the social environment that has a shaping influence on people's thinking and behaviour.

Hopes for promoting personal change in students are precisely that—'hopes'—not outcomes or competencies that can be measured. The idea of an education that will help young people become more wise, alert to the spiritual and moral dimensions to life, emotionally mature and environmentally responsible is very noble, but it must be understood in terms of the real possibilities and limitations of appealing to reason as the basis for personal change prompted by classroom studies. How the school models the values and virtues it proposes for the personal development of its pupils will also be an important contributing factor to any personal change on the part of pupils. Given this understanding of education for personal change, it is clear that hopes for wisdom, maturity and responsibility are hopes for across-the-curriculum studies; they cannot be limited to one subject area like religious education. Hence the importance of clarifying a holistic approach. This is one reason that teaching is aptly called a profession; in the original sense of the word, describing the work of those whose contribution to the welfare of the community was like a vocation or personal calling to serve.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT: PEDAGOGICAL INSUFFICIENCY AND POSSIBILITY

Clive Erricker

Hampshire County Inspector for Religious Education, UK

Introduction

This chapter focuses upon the debate concerning pedagogy in RE that has increasingly become a matter of concern for religious educators in England and Wales. It begins by summarising the present situation in relation to approaches to religious and spiritual education. It identifies ways in which there is a present pedagogical insufficiency in religious education, with particular reference to teaching and learning in Hampshire, UK, schools. It then gives critical consideration to prominent theoretical approaches to religious education and spiritual development from a pedagogical perspective, taking account of epistemological and hermeneutical tensions between them. The last section presents a methodology for teaching and learning drawn from the new Hampshire Agreed Syllabus, as an instrument for teachers accessing different theoretical approaches to religious education and providing pupils with an effective pedagogy for teaching and learning that addresses spiritual development in relation to the agency of pupils.

The Current Situation in Religious Education in England and Wales

It is possible that a sea-change is coming about within religious education (RE) in England and Wales. I identify this possibility but with the proviso that there are significant forces working against it (Grimmitt 2000, pp. 7–15). In this chapter I shall investigate the opportunity that I see opening up for the development of the subject and the difficulties that are likely to be encountered.

In his latest book Robert Jackson suggests a need both to broaden the scope of religious education and to address pedagogical issues (Jackson, 2004, p. 180). Here he acknowledges that he is in broad agreement with judgements I have previously expressed (Erricker & Erricker 2000), but differs in terms of the approach that should be taken. These questions of scope and pedagogy will inform the direction of this chapter with the hope that some common ground can be established for dialogue between theorists and researchers in religious and spiritual education that can have a subsequent influence on practice.

Theoretical Approaches

At present theoretical approaches to religious education are more numerous than has been the case at any time in the past fifty years since RE ceased to occupy a confessional stance. I regard this fertility as a positive sign, as does Grimmitt. But Grimmitt also draws attention to the lack of influence these approaches have on classroom practice and the pedagogical insufficiency of teaching and learning in RE (2000, pp. 15–23). Whilst Grimmitt is positive about the variety of approaches that could potentially enhance classroom practice, I fear that for others it suggests confusion. Whilst Michael Grimmitt's volume presents a collection of potentially influential pedagogies of RE (Grimmitt, 2000) and offers an excellent critical survey of approaches to the subject currently being advanced, Grimmitt himself is critical of these pedagogical resources being ignored in the teaching of the subject due to the influential interests of politicians and faith groups (2000, p.15). Jackson, in turn, criticises Grimmitt for not advocating a way in which this situation could be improved, 'apart from expressing the wish to take power away from politicians and faith groups' (Jackson, 2004, p. 177). Part of my purpose is to advocate a way in which this situation can be improved.

One of the results of this situation is that agreed syllabuses for religious education, providing statutory guidance, tend to reflect the thinking of government agencies presenting non-statutory guidance, in their design, notably the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and its model syllabuses (QCA, 1994), and ignore the approaches offered by curriculum theorists in the subject. With the introduction of a new non-statutory national framework for religious education in September 2004, produced by the QCA, which in draft form is firmly wedded to the design of the model syllabuses, we can expect the current state of affairs to be reinforced. It is significant that the national framework deliberately excluded pedagogy from its design.

This leaves us with an interesting dilemma. Religious education is replete with potential approaches to the subject. However, these approaches are in competition with one another and there is a lack of compatibility between them (for example, see Jackson, 1997, 2004; Wright, 1999, 2004; Grimmitt, 2000; Erricker & Erricker, 2000; Cooling, 1994). This incompatibility is not just a matter of the appropriate scope of the subject but, more significantly, resides in epistemological and hermeneutical differences. I shall return to this issue later.

RE in Schools

In schools, religious education is taught, with little exception in my experience of observing, teaching and planning, without regard to the pedagogical potential that these different theoretical approaches offer. Contrastingly, the major influences on the teaching of RE reside elsewhere, in the following areas.

First, schools are required to comply with their Local Education Authority's (LEA's) agreed syllabus, which constitutes statutory guidance. Locally agreed syllabuses do not give pedagogical guidance. In turn, the agreed syllabuses are largely influenced by the non-statutory guidance from the QCA (formerly Standards and Curriculum Assessment Authority [SCAA]), through the model syllabuses (SCAA, 1994) and, in future, the expectation being the national framework. These last two documents are indicative of the conservative character of present non-statutory guidance in that they register no significant change having taken place in the last ten years since the introduction of the model syllabuses in 1994. The same two attainment targets have been retained for the national framework that are present in the model syllabuses, despite the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) noting the tendency for schools, especially primary schools, to attend more obviously to the first attainment target, learning about religion, than the second, learning from religion (Ofsted, 1995).

A second major influence upon teaching and learning in religious education is inspection by Ofsted, which again lacks criteria for effectiveness beyond the demands of the locally agreed syllabus, and inspection reports often resort to the parlance of the model syllabus attainment targets.

A third influence is the GCSE boards. These have their own criteria for setting and marking examination papers and the subject is judged, in relation to the criterion of standards advanced by the government as a measure of progress, according to its residual figures (how well pupils have done in relation to their performance in other subjects taken), and the overall percentage pass rate in the subject.

Teachers of RE in secondary schools are under considerable pressure to ensure acceptable pass rates in their subject as an indication of 'value added', that is, progressively improved performance, which is a measure by which the government judges the management of schools in relation to pupil progress. This, in turn, affects the funding received by each school. An annual report is provided by each LEA to the QCA documenting the results of Ofsted inspections and GCSE results in RE. These are comparative in that LEA results are measured against national averages. If schools wish for specific support for RE they must buy in the County Inspector for RE, in LEAs that have retained a dedicated subject inspector, whereas generic guidance from consultants comes free as a result of government funding. As a result, drawing on my own experience within Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton, there is a tendency for most schools to avoid using the subject inspector for any sustained period that might result in the systematic development of pedagogy.

In summary, the situation for RE in schools is one in which the health of the subject is largely judged on the basis of the non-statutory guidance provided by the QCA, the inspection data provided by Ofsted, and GCSE pass rates generated

by the examination boards. RE teachers in secondary schools are under pressure to improve teaching and learning in the subject but with little or no specific, systematic and sustained pedagogical guidance and support for the subject. As a result, in effect, religious education finds itself in a position of stasis because of the conservative regulatory control of government agencies (QCA and Ofsted) and the government's insistence that progress will be measured by hard data based on GCSE success criteria. In this context, many teachers are wary of any risk taking and pedagogical innovation often falls into that category. Pedagogical innovation also demands a different attitude toward the quality of pupils' learning from the compliance model that the government's assessment of progress accents. In political and pragmatic terms there is no good reason for teachers of religious education to be either pedagogically adventurous or experimental in their approach to teaching and learning.

Finally, there is the influence of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs). Again, SACREs tend to be conservative in nature, but in a different way and for different reasons. SACRE representation is largely on behalf of religious traditions and, within that, with a preponderance toward Christian denominations. As a result, SACRE concerns tend more toward the representation of Christianity and the other major religions than toward more complex educational issues such as pedagogy. Furthermore, SACREs can be particularly protective of the scope of religious education. For example, in the recent review of the Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton joint Agreed Syllabus the major issue debated by the three SACREs was whether Humanism should be included within the document, rather than addressing its pedagogical innovation.

Overall, the above précis of the politics and pragmatics of RE does give us some indication as to why the subject suffers from a sense of stasis and identifies some of the main issues to be addressed if progress is to be achieved. We have not, as yet however, completed the picture. Within theory in religious education there has been a particular concern with the notion of spiritual development and the idea of spiritual education.

The Current Situation in Spiritual Development

Theoretical Approaches

Again, I begin with the issues of scope and pedagogy. Taking the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* as an initial frame of reference, we can gauge something of the characteristics of the debate that the term spiritual education has generated over the last ten years since its first issue. Jacqueline Watson's survey of the approaches to spirituality in relation to education, and specifically with reference to religious education (Watson, 2000) gives us a helpful resume. She argues that there is a lack of recognition of plurality, in relation to religious belief, within the debate about spiritual development. In doing so she cites, in particular, Hay with Nye (1998), Wright (1997), Priestley (1997) and Thatcher (1991) as examples. Her

argument is that the debate on spiritual development veers toward inclusivity of the secular rather than inclusivity of different religious perspectives. I think Watson's judgement is broadly correct, apart from a few exceptions published elsewhere (for example, Nesbitt, 2001; Erricker, 2001b).

In England and Wales the direction given toward an understanding of spiritual development in state schools has been inclusive of the secular, whilst valuing religious perspectives (Ofsted, 2003). However, the importance of Ofsted definitions has been weighted to ensure that spiritual development can be addressed across the curriculum for all pupils. This tendency not to identify different religious perspectives comes as no surprise, therefore, given the requirements for cross-curricular understanding of what spiritual development might mean, that Ofsted provide, and given that the theorists and researchers she refers to are also mainly concerned to avoid exclusively religious definitions or characteristics of spiritual development that would not be inclusive of the secular within state schooling.

Watson also detects that the majority of models of spirituality developed within this literature are naturalistic and universalistic in character. By this she means they assume that spirituality is a generic human characteristic that transcends religious or cultural difference. As an example she cites Hay and Nye's concept of relational consciousness and Hay's claim that it represents the potential for 'genuine social integration' and 'a free and humane society' (Hay with Nye, 1998, p. 175; Watson, 2000, p. 98).

Ofsted pay little attention to the literature on spiritual development (Ofsted, 2003), and Ofsted inspectors' judgements often appear to be 'highly individualistic and personal' (Watson, 2001). Also, the definition and characteristics of spiritual development that Ofsted present are equally naturalistic and universalist (Ofsted, 2003), and as a result, reticent to consider the relationship between values, social capital and spirituality (Erricker, 2002).

Watson's position, argued in more detail in a later presentation (Watson, 2004, paper), is that we need to reject such definitions of spirituality and engage in conversation across difference through a 'critical democratic approach' that reflects 'Rortian' conversation united 'by civility rather than by a common goal, much less by a common ground' (Rorty, 1980/1998, p. 318). She cites the approaches of Clive Erricker (2000) and Andrew Wright (1998) as examples of the sort of non-naturalistic and non-universalist stances that she has in mind.

As with the theoretical literature on religious education, there is a lack of compatibility epistemologically and hermeneutically at a theoretical level in addressing spiritual development, and published research on children's spirituality and spiritual development has not directly informed pedagogy in schools.

Spiritual Development in Schools

Still there is a lack of understanding of how to address spiritual development in schools as far as the schools themselves are concerned. Spirituality is not a term that exists in the lexicon of secular state schooling. It has to be translated broadly into

how young people develop certain characteristics or qualities beyond that of, but closely aligned with, the idea of being morally responsible citizens. These qualities are generic and also relate to the idea of what represents a universalist sense of human potentiality (Ofsted, 2003).

In the five Ofsted Licensed Training Courses on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development run for Hampshire schools in 2003–4, delegates were most concerned to understand what constituted provision for spiritual development. However, the idea of what spiritual development entails, as presented in these courses, is mainly advice on what constitutes effective teaching and learning and an appropriately inclusive school ethos. For teachers from schools wishing to pass an Ofsted inspection this was a language they could understand. However, the pedagogical advice conveyed did not extend to examining some of the major issues confronted in the research literature on spiritual development and children's spirituality. It is noteworthy that within fifty places taken up by schools only one secondary school was represented, suggesting that there is a lack of serious consideration given to spiritual development within a secondary sector dominated by subject specific curriculum concerns, framed in a similar way to that I have described above as applying to religious education. This also suggests that little attention is given to the complexities of the relationship between religious education and spiritual development in religious education.

Again, as with religious education, the agenda and prescription provided and inspected by Ofsted constitutes the base line for schools in considering spiritual development. Theoretical developments and research do not impinge upon teaching and learning and the result is pedagogical impoverishment. In the next section, which critically examines the merits of and tensions within different approaches to religious education and spiritual development, I begin with one approach to religious education that RE teachers in Hampshire schools and Ofsted inspectors in their reports most readily recognise as a way to address spiritual development within religious education.

A Critical Consideration of Approaches to Religious Education and Spiritual Development

Experiential Approaches to RE: The Case for Universalism

In the work of Hammond and Hay, et al. (1990) and, more recently, in that of Sue Phillips' *Theatre of Learning* project (2004), we can observe a trend toward crossing specific religious divides and yet retaining the importance of a religio-spiritual perspective. The impetus for this can be located in the influence of Mircea Eliade (1957) and other scholars who were concerned to ensure that modern secular society retained a pan-religious sense associated with the power of myth, symbol and ritual, and addressed questions of meaning. Also we can discern the influence of the sant/wisdom traditions that tend to work across religious divides, as in the case of Guru Nanak's teachings, Rumi, Christian contemplatives, and Sufis. From this

perspective great religious teachers, rather than religious traditions themselves, are the reservoirs of spiritual truth, though the latter can be understood as the vehicles for its application, since they provide the spiritual practices.

Philosophically, this mirrors a tension in Western thought between rationalism and the existentialist tradition, especially in the case of Heidegger and Kierkegaard. Labelled experiential approaches, these tend to draw on religions in an instrumental sense with an assumption that all religions tend to offer the same wealth of resources for imbuing life with spiritual purpose.

The idea of plurality from this experiential perspective is inclusive of difference but only insofar as different teachings offer compatible perspectives or pathways toward a greater spiritual truth. As with Hay and Nye's research on spirituality with children and the concept of relational consciousness, the basis of spirituality is universalist and naturalistic. We can characterise this approach as a-rational, truth being comprehended intuitively through spiritual practices rather than rationally through doctrine. Pedagogically this approach aims to enhance pupils' spirituality rather than their academic achievement. Phillips' approach to teaching and learning provides well thought out strategies for translating religious ritual, through experientially based activities, into meaningful spiritual and ritual behaviour that pupils can relate to their own experience at a symbolic and practical level.

These approaches have been successful in providing an engaging way for pupils to actively participate in religious education that has met the needs of a more informationally based world religions approach that struggled to move beyond providing accurate information about religion from the 1970s onwards. However, despite their ability to connect RE with the spiritual, their popularity with both pupils and teachers in many schools, and Ofsted inspectors' recognition of ways they address spiritual development as fulfilling the need to 'learn from' religion, there are critics of these approaches at a theoretical level, in particular Andrew Wright.

For Wright, experiential approaches are a form of Romanticism. This is a term Wright applies to critically identify approaches that spuriously, in his view, prioritise feeling and intuition over rationality in the pursuit of truth (Wright, 1998, p. 61; see also Jackson, 2004, p. 75). These are approaches to which Wright's comment can be applied, that 'insofar as religion is viewed as a response to human transcendence, the only valid theological option is that of a universal theology in which all religions are regarded as being equally true' (Wright, 2003, p. 287).

This brings us to the relationship between epistemology, hermeneutics and pedagogy. The universalistic assumptions being made in this approach presume that religious difference overlays an essential human likeness at a deeper spiritual level, suggesting that conflictual understandings can be ameliorated, or even resolved, by working at a level of spiritual connectedness. This avoids a different type of understanding of the spiritual that is more political and cultural within which both values issues of social justice and issues of religious truth are significant. Also, whilst these approaches provide effective strategies for engaging pupils with religion, they do not provide teachers with a comprehensive pedagogical model. By this I mean that working at the level of strategic engagement does not provide teachers with a

theoretical justification for the pedagogical activity they employ. These approaches address the problem of engagement in RE by exemplifying the relevance that pan-religious phenomena—symbol, myth and ritual—can have when they are related to the otherwise culturally secular awareness of many pupils. They operate in tension with the idea of religious difference being a significant socio-cultural phenomenon that needs to be acknowledged as an important and complex area of negotiation.

By restricting religious education epistemologically to a universalist assumption of human similarity or even essentiality, and hermeneutically to a sense of inner spiritual development, we develop a pedagogy that lacks sufficient complexity for pupils and teachers to engage with difference; relating to differing convictions, with regard to truth, and differing identities, with regard to belonging. My argument is not that this approach is not valuable but that its value needs to be scrutinised and reflected upon in a larger pedagogical context by both teachers and pupils. In contrast to experiential approaches I now turn to Robert Jackson's research on interpretive and dialogical approaches.

Interpretive and Dialogical Approaches: The Case for Positive Cultural and Religious Plurality

Jackson's interpretive approach has its basis in social-anthropology and ethnography. Thus, unlike Wright, he is concerned with the collection of empirical data drawn from different religious groups and individuals within groups as a representation of religions within an overall geography of social, religious and cultural plurality. His interpretive approach is a means to a form of representation that recognises and affirms diversity and acknowledges the researcher's role within the representation produced. Pedagogically, this is then transferred to the classroom as a means of engaging pupils with expressions of plurality with the aim that pupils should then respond reflexively.

Jackson characterises reflexivity as 'learners re-assessing their understanding of their own way of life (being 'edified' by reflecting on another's way of life)...making a constructive critique of the material studied at a distance...developing a running critique of the interpretive process—being methodologically self-critical' (Jackson, 2000, 2004, p. 88). By also 'having sensitivity toward the students' own positions' the teacher can 'manage learning that is dialectical' (2004, p. 89). Jackson's use of the term dialogical extends the interpretive approach in relation to pedagogy. In terms of classroom activity there are different 'dialogical elements' (2004, p. 109). Jackson exemplifies these as 'dialogue between pupils, between pupils and material studied and between pupils and teacher' (ibid). He is concerned that dialogical approaches should 'recognise the agency of children and young people' (2004, p. 110) and, amongst others, cites Julia Ipgrave's work in Leicester, UK, as an example of how this can be achieved.

Among the strengths of Jackson's approach is the recognition that plurality applies not only to social and cultural locations, whether local or global, but also to an individual's sense of identity; and that would apply to the pupils as well as

those groups researched. With this précis of Jackson's position in mind and taking account of other influential approaches, I now turn to some critical considerations related to epistemological and pedagogical issues, including reference to criticisms of my own position that Jackson has made. I shall then consider how religious education and spiritual development could move forward pedagogically.

Epistemological and Pedagogical Issues

Jackson's criticism of the relativist/postmodernist position (Erricker, 2000), from a pedagogical perspective, is that its epistemological assumption of knowledge as constructed and its accent on individualism prevent participation by pupils who do not affirm that stance (pupils with a religious faith, for example) and limits the scope of what is studied in a social sense; the horizons of study are foreclosed. Thus, for example, whereas Jackson's dialogical approach concerns itself with addressing social cohesion, the relativist/postmodernist position does not have this instrumental potential. Taking these two criticisms together this approach does not have the educational potential of dialogical models he presents, in either of the senses that Jackson advocates: for the individual learner or for pluralistic society. In particular I am concerned at Jackson's judgement that this approach forecloses dialogue and participation 'that is necessary for the health of plural democracies' (2004, p. 68).

Jackson's critical judgements largely relate to epistemological issues. This leads me to turn to certain assumptions that are made about truth claims and knowledge, which I have discussed elsewhere but not specifically with an educational context in mind (Erricker, 2001a). The extensive debate, largely initiated by the European Enlightenment and the rise of modern scientific method's concern with knowledge as empirical, has left us, as researchers and educators in both religious education and spiritual education, with an academic problem. In terms of modern scientific enquiry, metaphysical assumptions to knowledge are simply unsustainable because of their lack of verifiability or falsifiability. Thus, even if we wish to speak of knowledge in a realist fashion, it is impossible to equate religious truth claims with a modernist idea of knowledge. To make this point is not to say that religious truth claims cannot be made, it is simply that they are not knowledge claims, in a modernist sense. Whilst particular groups we research or study may still wish to make metaphysical claims to truth and thus equate their truth with knowledge we have to recognise the problematics associated with such a position. This is not to deny their truth, for the believer or group, but it is a cultural truth, a faith truth or individual truth—it is localised in custom, tradition and values positions of importance to those who hold it. Such truth is not changed by logical and empirical analysis (though there are internal logical procedures associated with theology or jurisprudence), which is the requirement of modern scientific enquiry.

It is obviously possible for religious groups to assert that their truth claims are knowledge claims (by virtue of revelation, for example) but that is a different use of the term knowledge and has to be acknowledged as such. Also, internal tensions within religious groups point to the difficulty inherent in this position;

for example, the difficulties of reconciling faith and doctrine. Wright's concern to embed religious truth claims in doctrine (Trinitarian Christianity, for example) and his criticism of the subjectivity of faith positions that proceed from religion viewed as a response to human transcendence puts him at odds with a whole strand of the Christian tradition that he labels as Romanticism—this including Schleiermacher and the existentialists (such as Kierkegaard)—and, in fact, requires pupils to acknowledge that faith positions are knowledge propositions. Rather, I would suggest that it is impossible to make such judgements about religious truth claims; they are of a different order and are best approached using Derrida's principle of undecidability (Erricker, 2001a; Derrida, 1981).

Jackson, by virtue of his research base being a particular social-scientific one rather than a theological one, deals with the truth claim-knowledge question in a completely different way. His reference to Cush's plea for 'epistemological humility' and 'methodological agnosticism' (Cush, 1999, p. 384; Jackson, 2004, p. 166) is of particular interest. This is in the context of Cush's discussion of positive pluralism which 'welcomes plurality as an opportunity' and 'does not teach that all faiths are equally valid like the relativist, or all paths to the same goal like the universalist' but 'takes the differences and incommensurability of world views seriously' (*ibid*). If I understand Cush correctly, and am correct in attributing the same sentiments to Jackson, then epistemological humility means not making epistemological judgements about the doctrinal truth claims of religion but being judgemental about other epistemological positions (or worldviews) that suggest the equal validity of faiths or that all faiths are paths to the same goal. This is a biased reading of epistemological humility that preferences the hegemony of distinct religious traditions. It also implicitly conflates the terms faith, truth claim and knowledge, thus avoiding the most significant issue.

Cush's position favours religious faith as a positive contribution to pluralism whilst omitting to make distinctions between expressions of faith positions that are willing to embrace pluralism and those that are not: different expressions of Islam are a case in point. Jackson's distinction in this respect, in his dialogical approach, seems to turn on whether they will contribute to a healthy democracy. Thus, it would seem, that judgements of inclusion or exclusion depend on the openness of any position to accept other positions positively. This, in turn, creates a particular type of inclusivity, different from that proposed by experiential approaches. However, Jackson and Hay both propose the same social outcome.

Jackson references Cush's approach to that of Cooling for the purpose of encouraging 'debate between people of very different, often fundamentally opposed views, and...assist in the development of strategies which enable people to work together for the common good despite their deeply held differences' (Cooling, 2002; Jackson, 2004, p. 166).

The term 'views' is a usefully broad and vague one to erase epistemological difficulty (unlike truth or knowledge). Also, the purpose of working together is a pragmatic one. Thus, what seems to be proposed is that epistemological humility should extend to not just the study of the subject (RE), but the subjects of the

subject (faith adherents), and, presumably, the students of the subject (pupils), for the instrumental purpose of social cohesion and democratic health. But, Cooling's statement concerning deeply held differences cannot be placed alongside working for the common good as if there were no tension between the two. Dialogue concerning what constitutes the common good will often be influenced by deeply held differences—social, moral and religious—held with firm conviction. It also needs to be pointed out that insofar as we regard the purpose of the subject to be the establishment of social cohesion or working for the common good we have entered the territory of relativism. By this I mean that our purpose is to agree, by consensus, on both what the common good is and how we achieve it. Consensus is precisely what we resort to when there is no epistemological foundation for decision making (Erricker, 1998, p. 60).

To put it bluntly, to the extent that we view RE as having an instrumental purpose within the context of plurality we have resorted to a relativist approach. With regard to the protection of the uniqueness of religious truth claims we have to recognise that such a claim in the context of plurality necessarily references to a certain type of plurality being acceptable and the participants within its idea of inclusivity being treated with integrity. As a result we have to observe those positions which are not granted such status and ask why. If Cush's judgement is against relativist and universalist positions it is necessary to ask upon what principle this is founded. I suggest the principle cannot be epistemological *per se*, since there is no apparent justification for doing so. However, if, as it seems, it is based on a principle of representation supported by current legislation in England and Wales (ERA, 1988), and the trajectory of RE in mainstream schools since the 1970s to promote the teaching of the major world religions with phenomenologically empathetic attention being given to them, then the judgement is made on the basis of its social and political capital.

Dialogue and Agency

In his commentary on dialogical approaches Jackson makes reference to Ipgrave's research and her use of Bakhtin's work on authoritative discourse. Jackson concludes that 'Ipgrave is more positive (than Bakhtin) about the authoritative discourse of the children (in her research) arguing that they sometimes consciously chose to accept the authority embedded in the language. Authoritative discourse, she argues, does not necessarily inhibit creative thinking' (Jackson, 2004, p. 120–121). We need to be quite clear here as to Bakhtin's argument and relate it to our discussion on knowledge, truth and relativism. In relation to authoritative discourse Bakhtin comments:

Another's discourse performs here no longer as information, directions, rules, models and so forth—but strives rather to determine the very bases of our ideological inter-relations with the world, the very basis of our behaviour; it performs here as authoritative discourse, and an internally persuasive discourse (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 342)

He refers later to authoritative discourse providing the ‘zone of the framing context’ (ibid, p. 344). He also creates a distinction between ‘internally persuasive discourse—as opposed to one that is externally authoritative—as it is affirmed through assimilation, tightly interwoven with ‘one’s own word’ (Bakhtin, p. 345).

Thus it is understandable that Ipgrave’s respondents might choose to accept the ‘authority embedded in the language’ and that she perceives this as ‘not inhibiting creative thinking’. Jackson’s referencing to the importance of reflexivity for researchers and for pupils in pedagogy can be applied here. As in our own research with young female British Shia Muslims on the subject of hijab (Erricker, C., 2003a; Erricker, J., 2004) it is very difficult to determine whether research subjects are voicing ‘internally persuasive discourse’ or their ‘own words’. In a sense, there cannot be clarity on this matter. However, Jackson’s measure of inclusivity does not sufficiently engage with the need for pupils to be able to make non-authoritative responses of a relativist kind without pejorative judgements being applied. Inclusivity for Jackson seems to have implicitly defined limits on the basis of authoritative discourse centred on religious truth claims and the democratic basis of social cohesion, that affect the agency given to pupils. I would also argue that we are embraced by the authoritative discourse of governmental bodies that seeks to become internally persuasive of the need to understand RE as needing to reflect these limits within the subject’s pedagogical intentions. In this respect we have to be wary of the idea of consensus within dialogue if it occurs within the limits of an already prescribed authoritative discourse based on the idea of positive plurality or social cohesion.

Having engaged with some of the significant issues within theoretical literature that affect the scope of and pedagogical principles of RE, I now turn to the pedagogical possibilities of the discussion conducted so far.

Pedagogical Possibilities

Having outlined some of the difficulties in aligning different approaches mentioned above, I now suggest how religious education can accommodate this diversity through a renewed consideration of pedagogy. I shall also give further attention to what the purposes of spiritual development might be within religious education.

My intention at this point is not to exacerbate the tensions within approaches and suggest that one should be given preference over others, but to indicate a way in which the subject can be enriched by the plethora of theoretical industry and the attention that has been given to developing different models of RE. I begin by providing an example from practice that I have observed, as to why the pedagogical confusion that is now prevalent requires attention that draws on theoretical models.

An Example of Pedagogical Confusion

To use Ofsted parlance, the following description relates an example of a lesson within which the teaching was good but the learning poor. I was aware that the teacher being observed was a good teacher but the problem that created the disparity

of judgement on teaching and learning reflects that there was no theoretical approach influencing the teaching in order to work towards appropriate learning outcomes.

This Year 11 GCSE class are given an engaging task, in groups, as teams of detectives. This is a lesson commonly available and used by RE teachers. They have to decide on the likelihood of differing outcomes concerning the claim to the resurrection of Jesus. These are that: the disciples could have removed the body; the Romans could have removed the body; the Jews could have removed the body; or Jesus was resurrected. The groups work together in an engaged manner with a spokesperson designated to report back to the class on their decisions based on the evidence available. The first group's spokesperson reports that the group decided that Jesus must have been resurrected because he was a special person. The responses of the other groups were of a similar kind. However, if the premise for evidence of resurrection is Jesus' presumed specialness then the empirical evidence upon which the enquiry of detectives is normally based has been over-ridden by a type of faith statement that could not have been taken into account. Here lies the problem. I do not know whether the students arrived at their conclusion because they presumed that this was the answer acceptable in RE lessons or whether there was a genuine acceptance of the possibility of miraculous happenings, of which this was an example. Either way the problem remains, a theology of resurrection has been reduced to an empirical enquiry into the literal assumption of a dead person as an historical act. This does not take us into theological concepts of resurrection, atonement and reconciliation, but rather ignores such existential concerns within the Christian mythos in favour of the sorts of conclusions we might come to about other forms of mundane incidents, as though this event were perhaps a rather exceptional version of the same—more significant perhaps than a case of lost property or crime, but inclusive of the possibility of miracles.

Here we have both epistemological and pedagogical confusion as a barrier to the challenge presented by theological reflection. As Grimmitt remarks, 'It is when teachers are unaware of the importance of applying pedagogical principles in their work...that pupils' potential for learning in RE is rarely actualised.' (Grimmitt, 2000, p. 19). To introduce a more sophisticated level of challenge and debate into the lesson the teacher needed to be aware that the focus is theological and that the learning depends upon the pupils engaging with hermeneutics.

Pedagogy and Planning

I suggest the above problem is embedded in the superficiality of planning with no recourse to theoretical reflection in relation to the challenge to be introduced within the development of learning. What I have exemplified above is not unusual in my experience of observing teaching in Hampshire schools in the UK; indeed it is an example of a teacher who was thinking strategically rather than just about instruction in content. Pedagogy is the key to addressing this apparent discrepancy between theory and practice, but it must be broken down into its constituent parts with regard to planning. In order to do this I propose four levels of planning that teachers need to consider: content, strategy, methodology, and method.

Most teachers first attend to the question of content in their units of work, especially in secondary education. They are concerned to accurately convey the beliefs and practices of religious traditions. Some teachers effectively incorporate strategies into pupils' learning in relation to creating interest in the process of investigation, but this is not necessarily well informed in terms of the potential of learning development in RE; it is often a way of making the subject matter interesting, engaging and more challenging but does not usually extend to further levels of pedagogical reflection. The third level, methodology, is necessary for this to happen. Bearing in mind that agreed syllabuses, the model syllabuses and the new national framework primarily give guidance only at level 1 content; and that other non-statutory initiatives such as the Key Stage 3 Foundation Strand Strategy (DfES, 2002) principally attend, in a generic way across humanities subjects, to how learning can be more creative, inventive, challenging and engaging, it is not surprising that methodology (planning for specific learning outcomes using a particular process with constituent elements on which those outcomes are based) is absent in teachers' planning in RE. The first agreed syllabus for religious education to introduce a methodology for the subject in the UK is the new Hampshire syllabus, *Living Difference* (Hampshire County Council, 2004): see figure 1 below.

Beyond this third, methodological, level there is a further level of planning that needs to be addressed that relates directly to our discussion in the previous sections, that of method. In this context method refers to the discipline used to study religion. Thus, social anthropology constitutes the method of Jackson's approach to the subject, whereas Wright's and Cooling's approaches use theology as their method. However, each method is subject to differing internal shifts and developments that alter the characteristics of approach, and changes in these characteristics are often to be detected across different methods. So, for example, feminism, postmodernism and ecotology have caused changes to, and diversity of, approach within theological and socio-anthropological method. Within RE in England and Wales phenomenology became the principle influence on method with the introduction of a 'world religions approach', following Smart's influence in the 1970s. Jackson's interpretive approach emerged as a 'new style phenomenology' paying greater attention to the problematics inherent in representation. Grimmitt has also adapted phenomenology through constructivism. Wright's critical realist religious literacy is a theological method focused on addressing the truth claims of religions, absent from phenomenological RE. It places theological discourse at the centre and an emphasis on the need for pupils' nurture to be re-addressed in terms of building faith commitment through religious literacy. In turn, Cooling's theological approach is different from Wright's partly because he does not adopt a critical-realist stance.

Notions of inter-faith and intercultural dialogue, social cohesion, spiritual development, values and moral education, citizenship and so on are the sort of contextual educational and socio-political influences on RE like moons with gravitational pull to which RE is drawn and by which it is influenced in various ways, and which interact with the particular method employed in the approach to the subject. We could say that method consists of a warp and a weft. The warp is the discipline, the

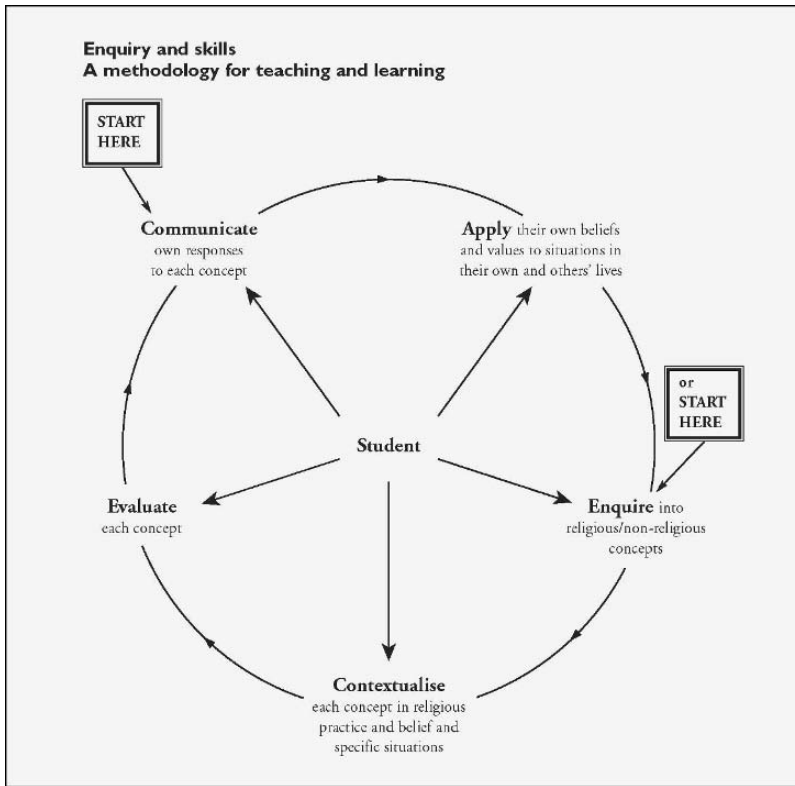


Figure 1.

weft consists of the prevalent influences within the discipline and within society that refines or reshapes its purpose and approach. The subject, RE in this case, is then influenced pedagogically by the way this method matrix is applied to it. The fact that there is a contemporary richness of debate about how RE should be approached, at a theoretical level, is a sign that academic thinking within RE does have a depth and maturity it has not previously possessed.

To ensure the pedagogical advantages of these theoretical reflections translate into practice in the classroom we must not seek to simplify, for example by excluding questions of method from material presented to teachers via statutory and non-statutory sources. Nor should we select out a method as the only appropriate one. Rather, we should help teachers to engage pupils with the complexity of the subject and the challenges it presents. At present this is precisely what is not promoted in RE. At secondary level units of work supporting the development of pupils learning in the subject need to exhibit a clear sense of continuity and progression at a level of planning that pays attention to complexity and diversity of method. However, for this to happen teachers need to have a methodology acting as the pedagogical

process for the delivery of the methods across units of work. Whilst the method changes, the elements of the pedagogical process in the methodology do not because they have a generic application that is adaptable to the employment of different methods. Engaging and creative strategies are then deployed to effectively progress the methodological process. Content is chosen as appropriate to the particular aspect of the subject being studied and the method employed.

The methodology provides the bridge to bring together theory (method) and practice and ensures, as a result, that RE has a pedagogical rationale that informs the process of teaching and learning. The Hampshire methodology seeks to ensure that teachers and pupils are entirely clear as to the intended learning outcomes of any piece of work, since the process is entirely focused on the development of learning through the acquisition of skills germane to conceptual enquiry (see figures 1 and 2). However, without a common methodological instrument giving teachers a framework for constructing sound pedagogical practice it is difficult to see how they can deal with the demands of introducing differing methods. Nevertheless, for pupils' development it is important they are introduced to these methods and engage with them both for the development of academic challenge within RE and spiritual development. As a result, in planning a scheme of work, as is done in schools

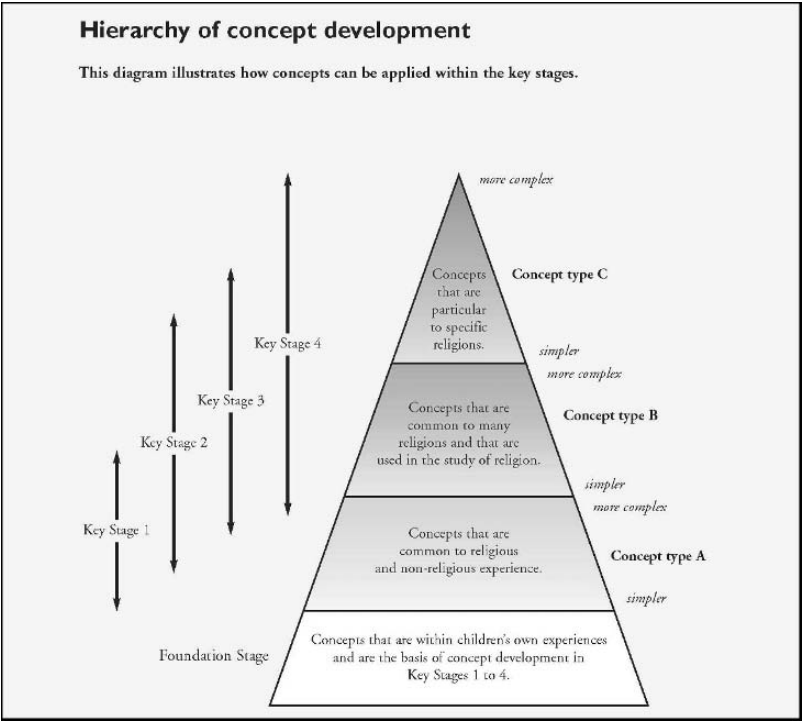


Figure 2.

within England and Wales at Key Stage 3, you would expect that teachers would introduce units of work employing different methods, not just different content.

The Imperative of Systematic Collaboration

For pedagogical development to be addressed there needs to be systematic collaboration between the QCA, theorists and researchers in RE, inspectors and advisors, and teachers. In turn there needs to be consultation with examination boards to ensure that pupils sit examinations that are relevant to the type of enquiry and skills development previously undertaken. At present, development groups have been formed in Hampshire to work on the production of materials for use in Hampshire schools. Some examples of developments toward the application of the methodology have already been published (Erricker, 2003b, 2003c, 2004), others are being written and trialled by Hampshire teachers. But there is a need for broader, funded, collaborative research and development to be conducted and evaluated.

Spiritual Development and the Issue of Agency

It is important that spiritual development is integrated into pedagogy in RE and not understood as something just addressed at specific but isolated points in learning. However, it is also important that educators do not attempt to pin down exactly what views pupils should hold in order to identify progress in spiritual development. Spiritual development is primarily a matter of addressing the agency of pupils within the pedagogical process. Within the Hampshire methodology the top half of the circle of enquiry identifies how this begins by changing the dynamics of the learning such that it is pupil led rather than teacher led (figure 1). From *evaluate* through *communicate* and *apply* the teacher is a facilitator of dialogue between individuals and groups within the class. The aim is not necessarily to arrive at consensus but to investigate and communicate across difference. In terms of Jackson's method and concern with social cohesion the application of the methodology might well produce a different dynamic from that of Wright's method, within which pupils are critically developing, defending and communicating truth claims as an expression of religious literacy. Jackson's exemplification of interpretive and dialogical approaches, for example those of O'Grady and Ipgrave, (O'Grady, 2003; Ipgrave, 2002; Jackson, 2004, p. 103–5, 117–121) present clear evidence of the importance of pupil's views, interests, engagement and voice being essential to the effectiveness of any pedagogy, and the above elements of enquiry in the methodology reflect the significance of this in a systematic way, in relation to planning and delivery. Similarly, the effectiveness of pupil engagement generated by the strategies used in experiential approaches can be accommodated within the methodology.

The methodology presents a common framework within which the hermeneutical process identified by Jackson (2004, p. 105) and those presented within the work of other writers (for example, Wright, 1998, 2003; and Grimmitt, 2000, pp. 207–226) can be entered into. Jackson's observation that religious education can be seen

as an unbroken hermeneutic cycle (2004, p. 105) can be compared to the idea of religious education as 'Interpreting religion in relation to human experience', the attainment target of the new Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Agreed Syllabus (Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council, 2004). However, the relationship between methods and methodology identifies how the variety of different epistemological and hermeneutical forms of engagement might be framed in a common pedagogical instrument whilst still protecting the integrity of the method. As a consequence, pupils will be provided with the opportunity to engage with, and critically reflect upon, different ways in which the subject can be studied and the significant issues in relation to plurality, dialogue, truth and agency that they address. We shall then be addressing pedagogy in a much more systematic and sophisticated way and ensuring that classrooms are democratically constructive and inclusive sites of learning.

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TO KNOW BEFORE WHOM YOU STAND: A PHILOSOPHY FOR A SPIRITUAL AND MORAL LIBERAL JEWISH EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Dr. Sherry H. Blumberg

*Congregation Am Echod Hebrew Studies, University of Wisconsin,
Milwaukee in Lindenhurst, Illinois*

Introduction

The challenges of the twenty-first century call for a rethinking of liberal Jewish education. While one of the tasks for the Jewish school of the twentieth century was to create a synthesis between the beliefs and practices of Judaism and the desire of its students to integrate into modern life, the twenty-first century is providing different challenges. Jewish education is confronted with Jewish families whose values change many of the basic assumptions upon which Jewish education was built.

Jewish education was, in the past, a means to supplement the Jewish practice of the home or to create an understanding of Jewish texts and practices. No longer can the Jewish school assume any Jewish practice in its students' homes; nor, for that matter, can the school assume that there is only one religion practised in those individual homes. No longer can one assume that children in parochial Jewish schools are there to be formed into Jews. Rather, one has to ask if the child is sent for other reasons, such as status or because the Jewish school is considered 'better' academically or behaviorally than the public institutions. Liberal Jewish learners are well-integrated into American society, but they may be woefully disadvantaged in their experience with Jewish life, belief, texts, and practices. Thus, a new philosophical approach to Jewish education is needed to address this changed reality. This chapter is an attempt to formulate that new approach. It is centered on the Talmudic injunction of Rabbi Eliezer: 'Know before whom you stand.' (Berachot, 28b)

Twentieth Century Jewish Educational Thought: A Short Review of the Literature

Several influential Jewish educators have contributed to the foundations of Jewish educational philosophy during the last century. Early in the twentieth century much of the writing about Jewish education was done by Jewish thinkers such as Abraham Joshua Heschel, Modecai Kaplan and Eliezer Berkovitz, among others. Their writings about education were often implications of their philosophy. People who were directly involved with schools would then explore how to put those scholars' ideas into practice. It was only later in the second half of the century that Jewish educational philosophy started to become a field of study in its own right.

The early practitioners took their impetus from both the Jewish philosophers and modern educational philosophers such as Joseph Schwab, John Dewey, R. S. Peters and Neil Postman (to name just a few). Thus, the creative work of the early twentieth century educators was an attempt at a synthesis between general educational theory and Jewish philosophy.

Barry Chazan's article on the crisis of Jewish educational thought was among the first attempts to call this lack of an original, non-derivative educational philosophy to the attention of the Jewish education community (Chazan, 1978). Soon after Chazan's article other writers such as Seymour Fox, Jeffrey Schein, Hanan Alexander and Isa Aron began to struggle with the task of creating a philosophy of Jewish education. For example, Seymour Fox developed a framework for defining the goals of Jewish education (Fox, 1983). Dr. Aron's work proposed that to create a 'liberal philosophy of Jewish education' one had to be more concerned with a problem-solving approach. She, therefore, proposed a philosophy of education based upon a structure of inquiry (Aron, 1986).

A major figure in twentieth century Jewish educational philosophy was Dr. Michael Rosenak. Initially proposed in *Commandments and Concerns* (1983) and later fleshed out in his later works, Rosenak's thesis suggested that the philosophy of Jewish education was to be found in the tension between the traditional texts and commandments of Jewish tradition on the one hand, and, on the other, in the concerns for the learner both as the group and as an individual. In writing his later works, Rosenak put his own theory into practice by writing in a way that described both the traditional Jewish texts and the individuals' reactions to Jewish learning, and then balanced the one against the other.

The Problem

In each of the works mentioned above, and in the many others that this short review could not mention, the assumptions that underlie the development of each philosophy are the Jewishness of the learner and the learner's household, the desire on the part of the learner's family that the learner be formed as a Jew (that is, educated in Jewish beliefs, traditions and values), and the desire of the learner to be socialised into a Jewish community. These older assumptions may no longer fit

today's learners. Jews have become a well-accepted and prosperous minority that is faced with a very high rate of intermarriage and assimilation.

Moreover, with the notable exception of the work of Isa Aron, most of the statements of Jewish philosophy could only be made to work, to one degree or another, in the educational context of Jewish day schools, where students were able to study Jewish and secular studies on a full-time basis. However, even in these day school environments, students often failed to develop strong bonds to the larger Jewish community or to a synagogue—the Jewish community's primary faith-based organisation.

For the great majority of the students who are enrolled in supplementary Jewish education (after school and 'Sunday schools'), they can get only a rudimentary Jewish education, given the extremely limited time available and often low priority given to the Jewish educational enterprise by parents, their children, and often even by cost-cutting budget decisions of the synagogues themselves. Education, which used to take place in a highly supportive and religiously active community, does not have a great chance of success with these limited resources and adjusted priorities.

Thus, if Jewish Education is to be viable, relevant and effective in the face of these changed conditions, we must either discover or create a new philosophical approach that considers and addresses each of these modern realities and challenges. Jewish life, thought and action has a vital and important life-giving role to play today. Struggling to find a new philosophical foundation upon which to build is part of the challenge. This chapter reflects this author's attempt at a beginning in this process.

A Sacred Task

Jewish learning and teaching are two sides of the same sacred task. The Hebrew words for both 'teaching' and 'learning' come from the very same Hebrew root: *Lamed, Mem, Daled*. Teaching is, in the Hebrew language, merely a more intensive form of learning.

Moreover, in Jewish tradition, the connection between teaching and learning is much more than just grammatical. Not only is learning a *mitzvah* (a commandment), Jewish tradition recognises that everything we do and say teaches. All of living is a teaching and learning process in which, according to Nachum Waldman, we are trying to 'construct a realistic and integrative view of the world based on what is learned (drawing on the experience of others) and upon what is personally experienced.' Our religious life and our religious experience are parts of this process, both formally (in school) and informally. What students are taught and what they acquire they will teach others. Thus, the sacred task of teaching and learning is as natural as living itself.

In addition to the interrelationship of teaching and learning, there is the foundational Talmudic injunction that is often found in synagogues (usually written in

large Hebrew letters on the wall or on a placard above the Holy Ark, where the Torah scrolls are kept): 'Know before whom you stand.' (Berachot 28b). It is this phrase that can form the basis for this new configuration of education philosophy.

To Know

What is the meaning of 'Knowing' for Jewish education? For the twenty-first century, knowledge includes both the acquisition of information about Judaism (fact, concepts, values, and skills) and a knowledge of self within the context of one's own community. Thus, 'to know' means to acquire both knowledge of Jewish texts, language, traditions and values, and the ability to put them into practice in one's own life through self-understanding and growth. (Blumberg, 1991).

Neither kind of knowledge is easily acquired, although there are more practical resources and published research available about how to teach the subject matter of Judaism itself. The limited time allowed for learning about Judaism is often a major problem that constrains the amount of depth and knowledge a person can master. Acquiring self-knowledge requires entirely different kinds of teaching and learning than are required for cognitive knowledge alone. Harold Lyon suggests that 'a certain amount of pain must be endured by any individual in achieving self-growth...[It is] an intense experience involving risks.' (Lyon, 1971, p. ix) This self-growth involves reflection upon how what is being taught affects one's individual self and others. It involves more than just the transmission of ideas. Indeed, it is the inner emotional and spiritual experience that can lead to a student's meeting with God.

In addition, there are really more than the two kinds of knowledge described in the preceding paragraph. Knowledge may be divided into paradigmatic or scientific knowledge, aesthetic knowledge, interpersonal and intra-personal knowledge, narrative knowledge, and spiritual knowledge (Eisner, 2001) Each of these different types of knowing must be taught through different kinds of teaching methods. For example, narrative knowing connects the individual to the group by telling stories. The connection through story involves both intention and action. Human beings attempt to create a believable story of their lives. Thus, the purpose of religious education is to have the students connect their own story to the master story of the tradition. As such, this narrative knowledge is passed on to the learners by involving them in enacting, owning, and participating in these master stories.

To 'know,' in an educational sense, therefore, becomes a complex aim in which traditional teaching methods are combined with process oriented, experiential learning activities. This kind of teaching will teach facts, concepts, Jewish values, Hebrew skills, ritual actions, Jewish history, story, and unique ways of enabling learners to see their own lives through Jewish story, text, and aesthetics. Most of all, for this kind of complexity to develop in an educational system necessitates an

open and receptive environment in which different kinds of learning and different teaching methods can take place.

Before Whom

The ‘Whom’ of our statement refers to the constituencies that are part of the process of Jewish education. These are the students, parents, Jewish tradition itself, the educational institutions (*i.e.*, the school community, whether synagogue-based or community-based), the general community, colleagues (Rabbis, administrators, teachers and the profession of teaching), ourselves and God.

Students

We begin with our students. The questions this philosophy must consider are: Who are they? What do they want and need from us? Who will they—can they—become?

We know that Jewish children, especially in the United States, are surrounded by stimuli of all kinds. Most of these children are well fed, well clothed, well housed, schooled, and ‘entertained.’ Yet, according to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, professor of childhood development at the University of Chicago, many of the children in the United States have not been taught how to ‘enjoy’ the activities of everyday life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993). This is especially true of the activities that lead to the acquisition of new skills and the development of new potentialities. Csikszentmihalyi says that we fail to give them ‘meaningful tasks and responsibilities.’ In schooling them, we tend to act as if we believe that in order to become happy and productive adults, students can learn all they need to know by ‘sitting in a crowded room and listening to an adult talk in an abstract language, while surrounded by other immature children.’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, p. 45) In addition, and despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, we expect that they will all learn at the same rate and obey our desires just because we think they should.

Rather than continuing with these unrealistic assumptions, we should refocus on what Jewish children—both individually and communally—need to be educated ‘Jewishly.’ *Educate*, in this context, should be understood in its original Greek derivation—to *draw out*. The children must each have their own special connections to Judaism and their own future Jewish lives *drawn out* of them, so that they can become the best they can possibly be and find enjoyment in the meaningful tasks and study of Jewish life.

However, to draw out the best from any given individual, one must know that particular individual. To know each of these learners as individuals, with their own stories so far in this world, we need to discover them as unique persons. This includes uncovering how they think, what styles of teaching are best suited to enable them to learn, what aspects of their personality enable or hinder their learning, and in what specific ways they experience life.

To know a child in such depth takes time. In the present system of Jewish schooling, getting to know the child in this way is seldom possible in other than a day school environment. Thus, the practical application for supplementary schools (which may teach the child from only two to four hours each week) would require that a single teacher continue with one small group of children throughout several years of their education. To truly *know* the students, a teacher needs to experience life and Jewish living with them, allowing them to teach the teacher about themselves, just as the teacher shares his or her own Jewish life and Jewish passions with them.

Parents

Our children live in families. As such, if a theory of Jewish education is to be effective, it must consider not only the students but their families as well. Some of the families will have different faith traditions in the nuclear family and many will have grandparents and other close relatives that are of different religions. Getting to know each family's needs and desires and its stories becomes vital to the success of the educational process.

In Jewish tradition the teacher is to be respected as if the teacher were the student's own parent. This assumes implicitly that a student's parents are entitled to respect. For the twenty-first century, Jewish educators will need to treat their students' parents with at least the same respect they expect from their own colleagues. We must work with our learners' families, helping them to appreciate that they are the learners' primary teachers. It is important for Jewish educators to assume that parents want what is best for the student and to understand that parents have chosen to give their child a Jewish education. However, the parents and their wishes can only be respected if an effort is made to know them *and* their wishes.

The implications of knowing the family suggest that if we wish to change a family's orientation, Jewish educational resources should be directed towards educating the parents to other possibilities of Jewish life. Family educational programs, parent programs and other alternatives all become important tools in helping our students' families to become good teachers of Judaism for each of their children.

Jewish Tradition Itself

Jewish education is a tradition rich in history and texts. From the Bible to the Talmud and Midrash, to the Responsa and philosophies and mystical writings, to the stories and histories and anthropological and sociological studies of today, we Jews have a wealth of written resources.

Liberal Jews have chosen to interpret the Jewish tradition in the light of modern scholarship and modern life. Such interpretation requires at least a basic knowledge of the Jewish tradition and its fundamental texts. Therefore, while not necessarily accepting the Bible, Talmud, or Halacha as either unchanging or divinely ordained,

it becomes an educational imperative to know the texts in order to interpret them. Indeed, this liberal approach requires a greater depth of knowledge and insight than if one were just to accept the teachings of the past on faith. To be responsible for interpreting and changing the tradition while still hewing to its essential character implies an awesome responsibility that can only be exercised from a basis of real understanding and knowledge.

Many of the writings and lives of Jewish tradition are the teachers of the past. (Rabbis Hillel and Shammai, Rabbi Meir and Bruria, Rashi, Nachmanides and Maimonides as well as The Baal Shem Tov and Isaac Luria, Rebecca Gratz, Emma Lazarus and many others would all be included in this list.) Their teachings are included as content and subject matter to be studied by the students. It is a challenge indeed to enable students and parents to struggle with past interpretations of text in order 'to know it' and to link their lives to it. This is especially true given the limited time that supplementary religious schools are allowed for teaching and learning. The teachers and educational leaders who design the programs for these supplementary schools are helped in this awesome task by Michael Rosenak's theoretical framework (Rosenak, 1987). That framework can help the curriculum designer to negotiate between the two major educational purposes which can seem to be polar opposites: the one approach being normative ideational and the other deliberative inductive. For the twenty-first century, to stand before Jewish tradition will require that we develop a balance between these two approaches that will fit both our parents' and students' needs.

Jewish Educational Institutions

Teachers are often pledged to the goals and objectives of the institutions for which they work, teach, preach, and to which the learners and their families belong. If the institution's goals differ widely from those of its teachers or of its educator there will be a problem in the application of this philosophy.

For the twenty-first century there are five main educational aims toward which all Jewish educational institutions should strive. These are: 1) Education for knowledge; 2) Education for individual and communal participation; 3) Education for commitment; 4) Education for character development and growth; and 5) Education for self-transcendence. Each of these aims is briefly described below.

Education for knowledge encompassing all of the ways *to know* was defined above. Schools will need to develop curricula that teach the traditional study methods of reading and interpreting Jewish texts, such as *Hevruta* (studying texts with a partner), or *PaRDeS* (interpreting by examination of the plain meaning of the text, its interpretations, its allegorical references, and its hidden meanings). The curriculum should be designed to help students to acquire an aesthetic knowledge of Jewish life with its special sights, sounds, smells and tastes. Master stories of the Jewish people will be intertwined with inter- and intra-personal knowledge. The student's knowledge of the history and the life of the Jewish people will develop through learning the skills of Jewish living and through insights into the Jewish

communities by use of the media of literature, music, art, worship, dance, and cooking. The students' schooling will also help them to experience the political structures of the Jewish community.

Education for individual and communal participation becomes a critical goal because of the worldviews in the twentieth century that focused on the individual as the final authority for behavior. This individual emphasis, when untempered by a sensitivity and a willingness to grant at least equal respect to the needs of the group, has proven to be somewhat corrosive to the Jewish community. Judaism grew from communal religious experiences over more than two millennia. The strongly communal values that have sustained it and which are at its ethical core—values such as *Tzedakah* (required righteous giving), *Hachnasat Orchim* (welcoming the stranger), and *Gemilut Hasadim* (acts of loving-kindness to others) are not just nice things to do nor even acts of charity; they are commandments. In addition, the communal nature of redemption and salvation (the belief that redemption will come only when *all* have peace) themselves suggests that this education for individual and individual participation is a vitally important goal.

Many—if not most—of the families who enter our Jewish educational institutions will inevitably be influenced by, and strongly oriented to, the 'personal relevance' philosophy of the twentieth century. This often unconscious but generally pervasive belief in the centrality of the individual makes the community's needs subordinate. If we are to have any real chance of success, we must recognise this belief and shape our educational approach to focus both on individual actions and on communal participation. Our teaching must demonstrate how communal participation and action are necessary to Jewish existence *and* that they can still be personally relevant and rewarding. Self-knowledge and a desire to become an active member of the group can be fostered by various group process models of teaching, by affective models of teaching such as Confluent Education (see, for example, Joyce & Weil, 1980), and by providing other learning experiences that promote cooperative learning.

Education for commitment concerns the formation of a personal covenant with the ongoing covenants between God and the Jewish people. Commitment is viewed not only in terms of belief, but also in terms of actions, values, and future choices the individual will make (Rosenak, 1987). Commitment to Jewish action—especially to the ethical commandments—enables an individual to find deeper meanings in Jewish life and facilitates a religious connection to God.

Education for character development and growth involves the Jewish concept of *menschlichkeit*—a Yiddish word that encompasses *being a good human being* in its fullest sense. Jewish education for the twenty-first century must teach students to be not only human and humane, but also filled with reverence for life, compassion for others, concern for the health and well-being of the planet, and a deep sense of justice for all.

Education for Self-transcendence is the last and perhaps the most difficult of the goals. Self-transcendence enables a learner to connect with the past, present and future as he or she moves 'beyond oneself at the cognitive, moral and affective

levels' (Conn, 1986). Education for self-transcendence is especially important for Jews in this new century, because it can open an individual learner to the experience of God. In an increasingly secular world, this aim becomes a critical function of Jewish education if educators are to be faithful to Jewish roots which grew out of the relationship with the one God.

Educating for self-transcendence is actually the first step in educating for religious experience. The curriculum of the school can help the learner connect Jewish texts and ideas to the inner life of the learner. Activities that help encourage this self-transcendence include the use of prayer and worship, explorations of patterning and imagining, meditation, reflection, journaling, music, movement, and other creative endeavors (Blumberg, 2002).

Our Communities—i.e., Jewish and Secular

Samuel Blumenfield has said 'A Jewish education is indispensable for the Jew vis à vis his non-Jewish neighbors' (Blumenfield, 1952). In today's increasingly complex world, our students must be educated not only as Jews but also as citizens of the country in which they live.

Jews have made substantial contributions to this society—from its basic values to its worst ills. Yet, Jews are often accused of favouring Israel above the security of the country of their citizenship. Jewish education in the twenty-first century has an obligation to the community in which its teachers and learners dwell to teach that Jewish values of justice and social consciousness extend to the secular community as well as to the Jewish community. Thus, charitable giving, civic participation, voting, and working for the benefit of all humanity—Jew or non-Jew—should be of concern to each Jew.

Colleagues—The Profession of Teaching Itself

Teachers have often been expected to be representatives of the adult Jewish world and to model Jewish life and learning. The profession of teaching in a Liberal Jewish context is made more complex, because its teachers are interpreting diverse and sometimes conflicting values and norms. In addition, the idealised world in which Jewish teachers work often does not match the lives that the students and their families will live.

Standing before our colleagues means that we must be aware of the many contradictions teachers face in trying to stay true to Jewish tradition, to the learner, to the family, and to the institution. These conflicts are inherent in the job, and teachers will be held responsible individually and as a group for the success of our educational endeavors. If our actions as Jewish teachers in relation to our students, their parents and our Jewish tradition are conscious and caring, then our actions will reflect well on our colleagues—not only within our own particular institutions, but also within the greater Jewish community as a whole.

Ourselves—We must know Ourselves

In an article on the Lives of Teachers, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot says that for many teachers ‘feelings of isolation fill the daily experiences of teachers’ (Lightfoot, 1983). The teacher’s role is to be the ‘giver,’ and that kind of intensive giving can be very lonely and draining unless the teacher feels that he or she is getting something special in return.

Thus, teachers must know themselves well and find enjoyment in the tasks of teaching both the subject and the learners. This involves holding the vision of what teachers can accomplish and understanding of how teachers make a difference. In such a complex time, teachers may be confronted with situations that stretch their ability to approach individual learners or students objectively. For example, a teacher who disapproves of intermarriage may find that prejudice interfering with his/her approach to the child of such a marriage. The better teachers know themselves and understand the feelings with which they approach any particular student or situation, the better those teachers will be able to fulfil the obligation to teach every individual student.

God—Religious Experience

Jewish education for this century stands, above all, before God. We are human beings created in the image of the Divine, and we are a covenant people, a holy nation. Liberal Jews need to create an educational system where the all the participants can develop an awareness of God, explore ideas about God, and develop both a personal and a communal relationship to God. Teachers and learners need to explore their relationship to revelation as found in sacred Jewish texts and in everyday Jewish life itself. Participants need to experience communal worship and private prayer. Educators must create places where each individual feels that they have a sense of hopefulness and purpose, where they can explore their own experience of God or Godliness, and ask, ‘What does God require of me, of us?’

And so...the ‘whom’ before which we stand has many different meanings, each with its own needs and demands. In the twenty-first century these needs are often in conflict. A philosophy of Jewish education must help the Jewish educator negotiate between and with these varying constituents and come to an education that acknowledges and helps to educate learners with widely divergent needs.

We Stand

Standing is the part of the philosophy that relates theory to practice and education to the reality of life. Jewish education in the twenty-first century stands before all of the diverse groups mentioned above and before whom we stand. Often, the objectives that one group feels it most wants and needs will conflict with the objectives of another group. Faced with such conflicts, how can we stand before all of them, know them, respond to them, love them, teach them, and learn from them?

What is the ethical and religious way to accommodate the divergent needs of all of the parties before whom we stand but still remain true to our own principles?

The answer returns to the meaning of education itself—the teaching and learning process. Jewish educators begin to understand that, at any given moment of their lives, they are standing at some point along their own life-long religious journey. The journey is different for the educator, the learner, and their families. In this educational philosophy, Jewish education must see itself as both standing and moving. Jewish education becomes the movement of self-conscious, thinking, feeling, sensing, caring, and transcendent beings in relation to God and to other human beings. This educational vision enables each of the participants to learn from the experiences of their own religious journeys. The application of this philosophy can awaken, develop, and sharpen a consciousness of the needs of others. Each educator will be able to stand before his or her constituents and move with them in the same direction.

When, as will inevitably occur, the educator and the institution must take a stand in opposition to the desires or objectives of another one of the constituent groups, that stand must be taken with both honesty and humility—unafraid of the disagreement, but with full knowledge that the Jewish tradition demands that those whose position is being opposed not be humiliated. In this way, disagreements can remain ‘for the sake of heaven,’ recognising that each side is made up of people trying to live the best lives they can.

An example of the negotiations of the competing needs may be illustrative. A child in a teacher’s class comes from a mixed-marriage home with a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother (Catholic background) who has agreed and taken seriously the decision to raise the children as Jews. Because the teacher comes not from a Liberal but from a more traditional background, she believes that without a Jewish mother or a formal conversion, the child is really not Jewish at all. Still, the school, along with the Liberal synagogue of which it is a part, accepts the child as a Jew. The family has two living sets of grandparents, but only the Catholic ones actively practise their religion.

The teacher has come to know the student as a curious, serious, thoughtful young man who loves sports, collects baseball and basketball cards, and who is passionate about animals. One day, the student comes to school with a dilemma—his non-Jewish grandparents want him to take his animals to be blessed during the Feast of Saint Francis. His parents are very divided on the subject, and he asks the teacher for an opinion.

Applying this philosophy of education, the teacher must ethically stand before each of the parties—the parents, the student, the Jewish community and its traditions. The teacher owes it to the student to hear the issue and draw out the student’s feelings and confusion, and to assure him that he (the student) can make a wise and reasoned choice. Although she need not agree with the grandparents’ request, the teacher owes it to the parents to respect the parents’ whole family by treating the grandparents’ wishes seriously and being careful not to demean or denigrate them. The teacher owes it to Jewish tradition, and the institution is to make a clear

presentation of the various alternatives and to anticipate the likely consequences of each choice. Once the choice is made, the teacher can express his or her own opinion, but only in a way that supports the legitimacy of the student's decision and the right of the child to make his own choice. Finally, helping the young man to reflect upon the decision and to explore how the decision helped or hindered his development as a person and as a Jew can become a critical turning point for self-transcendence.

Thus, standing is the active part of this philosophy. It requires listening, gathering all the facts, balancing the needs of the constituents, and finally deciding upon some course of action that reflects an ethical use of the educator's power. *To stand* is to take a stand that is compassionate, just, empathic, and realistic. None of these is an easy path. Balancing all four of these ethical qualities together is the real challenge.

Conclusion

'To Know Before Whom You Stand' is a Liberal Jewish philosophy of education designed for the challenges of the twenty-first century. In an age where some of the basic assumptions of Jewish education are being challenged as less and less applicable to modern realities, this philosophic approach can offer a way to acknowledge the competing needs and desires of all the constituents. Once acknowledged, a way might be found that would allow for each party to be treated with respect despite the disagreements presented. Knowing before whom you stand encourages a position of integrity in making the educational decisions one must make.

Beginning with an expansion of the concept of *knowing*, redefining the major aims and goals for Jewish schools, and exploring the various groups that may further complicate the already complex task of education, this philosophy begins to address some of the issues that Jewish education must face. This philosophy of education is by no means complete. It is a beginning that builds upon the Jewish educational ideals of the past, draws from the contributions of some of the best secular educational thinkers, and attempts to create an approach to Jewish education that will enable the teacher, learner, family, school, community, and Jewish tradition to move together along a path towards God. *Ken Yehi Ratzon* (May it be God's Will).

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CHANGING LEARNING PARADIGMS IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSROOM

Patricia Malone

Australian Catholic University

Introduction

An observer in contemporary religious education (RE) classrooms in Australian Catholic schools would note differences in language, emphases and learning approaches, although the topics would have similar names. It is possible to analyse the classroom process in terms of the role of the teacher, the learning approach, the emphasis on content and student interactions. The other important aspects are the context of the teacher and students and the experiences of life, learning and religion that they bring to the RE classroom. In this chapter the writer discusses the interrelationships between these variables in the RE classroom from the perspective of an active participant over the past forty years. It considers the extent to which these changes reflect the development of a changing paradigm. In each case the approach is analysed, and there is comment on the level to which teachers and other interested parties have appreciated the challenge and value of the specific approach.

Hack (2004, p. 38) noted that the concept of paradigm shift was first identified by Kuhn in the scientific field to describe the situation where data cannot be explained within the existing belief systems. At times results require a new way of viewing reality which gradually develops into a new system of beliefs or a paradigm shift. This chapter focuses on the changing beliefs about the relative importance of the elements in the RE learning process, and the type of interactions that develop. Various sets of data highlight the changing discourse and the evolving learning paradigms for religious education.

Changing Frameworks

As a person who began teaching in Australia in the 1960s, this writer has been part of many discussions on the nature and purpose of religious education. The various approaches discussed in this chapter are presented as indicators of the understandings of each period. The people who presented new insights, the changing social context and educational approaches are themselves part of the changing process and form part of this analysis of change. The writer, in her selection of approaches, has chosen those which have been widely used in RE classrooms of Catholic schools and also have been part of the broader Australian context. The writer has been an active participant in the key Australian associations such as the *Australian Association for Religious Education (AARE)*, with a focus on Christian school religious education, and the *Australian Association for the Study of Religion (AASR)* with its tertiary academic focus on the broader study of religions. She has worked in Catholic schools; developed secondary curriculum guidelines for the Archdiocese of Melbourne, and has been a lecturer at Australian Catholic University and its predecessor Catholic Teacher Colleges. She has contributed to curriculum material for the New South Wales Government Board of Studies course, *Studies of Religion*, served on curriculum committees for the three Catholic Education Offices in Sydney, and researched the development and use of curriculum material throughout Australia. (Malone, 1982, 1990, 1995, 1996, 1997).

Although the focus is on the Australian context, the key participants have been part of international discussion groups such as International Seminar for Religious Education and Values (ISREV), and overseas speakers and researchers have regularly visited Australia, so the developments noted in this chapter reflect the broader context. In a keynote address for the 1998 AARE conference, the writer (Malone, 1998) analysed the range of topics and presenters for the conferences from 1967–1998; these highlighted a growing awareness of an educational rather than theological approach to religious education, and a movement towards an emphasis on spirituality within the multi-faith, multicultural Australian context. Prior to 1980 all speakers were from overseas with the majority from the UK; speakers such as Harold Loukes, Ronald Goldman, John Hull, Edwin Cox, Ninian Smart and Michael Grimmitt ensured that the key Australian religious educators were in touch with the developing understandings in the UK of the changing nature of the subject of religious instruction/religious studies/religious education in the compulsory classroom.

The 1960s

In Catholic schools in the 1960s the subject was generally called Catechism or Religion. The focus was on the content, and the task of the student was to learn set answers to prescribed questions. It was the role of the teacher to present the material with explanation as required. Most of the educational focus was on preparing resources that would motivate and involve the students. There was a growing awareness in RE, as in other subjects, that rote learning and reward and punishment

for successful memorisation were not the whole of the learning process. When the author first began teaching, the students had their Catechism text and Catechism workbooks which provided a range of activities such as crosswords and word puzzles to motivate the students in their memorisation tasks.

The Bible gradually became a text in the Catholic classroom (it had long been one in other Christian schools) as the *kerygmatic* approach became the generally accepted process used in the classroom. The *kerygmatic* approach emphasised the good news of the Scriptural message; and was introduced into Australia through the visit and writings of Hofinger in 1960, although it had been in use in Europe since the 1940s. The nature of the content changed as a result of theological and scriptural development, but in the classroom the focus was still on the content. A new text book series was developed under the auspices of the Catholic Bishops' Conference to enable the students to learn this content. The *My Way to God* texts for the infant and junior primary classes, and the *Catholic Catechism Books 1 & 2* for upper primary and junior secondary, reflected this scripture-focused approach and the educational understandings of the time. It was the content that changed, and the underlying assumption that the purpose of the lesson was not just to know the doctrine of the Church but to appreciate the 'good news' of the Christian message. The same content was presented at all levels of the school without any appreciation of the stage of readiness of the learner. The learning paradigm was still one that saw the teacher as the repository of the tradition with the role of handing it down to the student.

Changing Contexts

Within the Catholic Church the 1960s were a significant period, as the Second Vatican Council provided a new context in which the Church recognised itself within the modern world, and became more inclusive, respecting the place of other religious traditions. The liturgy reflected this new life in the reform of its symbols, language and involvement of the laity. The experience of the 'new' liturgy gave life to many school worship experiences and itself became a source of content for RE. Another teaching of this Council which had a great influence on religious education was the awareness that God's revelation had not ceased with the last book of the Bible or the last credal statement, but was part of the ongoing experience of the life of the believer. Australian religious educators gradually became aware of the importance of this insight, particularly from the works of Gabriel Moran (1966), although this life experience approach became embedded in curriculum material of the 1970s.

Prior to the 1970s most Australian Catholic religious educators were also members of religious congregations. They were becoming part of the wider educational world as they undertook University studies and became aware of the social sciences and their significance for interpreting the learning process. The understandings of the developmental psychologists such as Erikson and Piaget were being considered, and these began to affect reflective teachers as the realisation

of the varying stages of readiness of the students became an element of the teaching/learning process.

The 1960s in the Western world was a time of great hope, of 'flower power' and the belief that the individual could bring about change, and the music of the period reflected this optimism. The learning paradigm in the RE classroom, however, still had a major focus on the content, even though the actual material studied was changing. The teacher's role was to receive this content from the official Church and present it in as engaging a manner as possible. The emphasis on scripture in the content was new to the teachers and therefore exciting for them, and they were generally enthusiastic, but the students soon found it as repetitious as the previous Catechism answers; one group of secondary girls in Sydney actually formed an 'anti-Abraham club'. It was assumed that the students and teachers were part of a living Catholic community and the subject was to provide the necessary understanding of beliefs and practices already accepted. In the changing reality of the sixties this was no longer a valid assumption.

As in all periods of change, although the majority were still using the set catechism texts and the Bible with its emphasis on content, the world of the students, especially those of secondary age, was moving outside the boundaries of this material. The author was part of a group of religious educators in Sydney who, in response to the needs of their students, developed 'out of school' learning experiences, which used the music of the period and provided opportunities for reflection and discussion about the students' world of meaning. In the discourse of these educators even the name of the subject was changing, and was being referred to as 'Christian living' to indicate a change in emphasis from content to the lived reality of the students. Paradigms change because of changing systems and are enunciated through the initiative and creativity of individuals. Rationales and philosophical underpinnings emerged after the event in most cases. These changes were initiated by practitioners.

1970s

The interplay of this range of factors led to a major change in the learning paradigm that developed during the 1970s, but was not always understood from an educational, theological or classroom perspective. Educationally, as noted above, issues of individual development and the concept of readiness for learning raised questions about selection of content and processes that were appropriate to the age group. The work of a range of educators and the great impetus towards discovery learning in the sciences changed the language and the framework of teachers. The author, in the early seventies, was on the State curriculum committee of the *Australian Science Education Project* and took into her RE planning this approach to learning, which was inductive in nature and focussed on helping the students make meaning of their environment. The resources for this project were provided to all schools but were used only with limited value as the approach was not really understood by many teachers and actively opposed by some science academics who saw any change

from a focus on knowledge and the systematic analysis of the subject matter within established subject frameworks as a reduction of standards. An integrated holistic approach to Science in the senior years survived only for a limited time and reverted to separate subjects such as Physics and Chemistry.

Theological Developments

Theologically the growing understanding of the presence of a revealing God in the world was stated clearly in the national Catholic directory, *The Renewal of the Education of Faith* (1970, pars 105–121), as one of the four sources of content, which were listed as ‘Sacred Scripture, Tradition, Liturgy and All Creation’. An educational discourse which proposed that the world of the students is a source of content required new processes and skills of the teacher. Babin (1968), a French religious educator, described the challenge this changing paradigm held for the educator:

Formerly the religion teacher began with his own questions, or standard ones, and responded with standard answers...Today the starting point should not be a set of standard questions but the acceptance of pluralism...we must accompany our young people on their quest for meaning and be truly open to the varied ways in which different ages and religions have answered the question of faith (Babin, 1968, pp. 59–60).

This asked a great deal of teachers and was seen as an invitation to anarchy by many who still saw the statements of the teaching Church as the only content for the RE lesson. Many teachers did not have a clear understanding of the theological underpinnings of this experiential approach, and simply moved to open ended discussions, which started with the students’ experience and stayed there throughout the process. The relationship between the four sources of content was not understood and neither was the key methodological imperative of the *Renewal of the Education of Faith* to a ‘twofold fidelity’ (1970, par. 160), namely, respect for the Word of God and for the needs of the students.

The difficulties related to the integration of the experiential approach into the RE classroom and the need to retain fidelity to the traditional emphasis of the Christian message led to a Synod of Bishops being called to explore these issues. The Roman document *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979) flowing from this synod had a strong emphasis on the need for a systematic approach, in which the ‘whole message’ was to be taught. However, it also stated that material developed ‘must try to speak a language comprehensible to the generation in question’ (John Paul II, 1979, p. 73). The document mainly used theological language, although there was some recognition of educational developments. It reflected a paradigm in transition where the interactive process was an important element, yet the content was still maintained as central. This document was not written for classrooms in a school context as most catechesis throughout the Catholic world took place outside of the

school setting. It was often quoted, however, by Australian religious educators as if it had been written for the classroom.

Catechetical Disputes

The 1970s was a period of both confusion and conflict about religious education within the Catholic Church. A strong dichotomy developed between those who were able to recognise and use the emerging discovery learning paradigm, which was more inductive in approach, and those who were operating from a deductive approach of teaching about and from formal doctrinal statements. The added complexity of the emerging theological paradigm, in which the Church was no longer seen as essentially hierarchical but as the 'people of God' where all were called to holiness, was another framework not just for discussion but for dispute. In the name of orthodoxy some people and some approaches were named as heretical or as departing from orthodoxy. The Melbourne Secondary Guidelines (1977–78), which the author developed and which all teachers in the Melbourne Archdiocese were required to use, were actually put on a list of material forbidden to be used in the neighbouring Sandhurst diocese. The author and the Director of RE in Melbourne were also personally forbidden to teach in this and one other Victorian diocese. Bishops' Conferences from other countries were able to prepare national directories for their teachers, but the division amongst the Australian Bishops was too strong, particularly with respect to the developing experiential approach. A sub-committee of the Bishops did prepare a statement but it was published under the auspices of the Bishops' Committee for Education (1977).

The divisions were not just restricted to the Bishops. At the beginning of the decade a senior text book, *Come Alive*, had been prepared by a committee at the behest of the Bishops' conference. Whereas the texts of the 1960s had been situated within the kerygmatic paradigm, this book, as its title reflected, was firmly in the life situational approach. The authors were creative teachers and prepared a wonderful resource using contemporary literature and art but with very few directions for the teacher. The Teacher's Manual (1971, p. 3) actually stated 'we have deliberately understated our notes for the teachers' as they wanted the teachers to respond to the needs of their students, and they noted that the situations are so diverse that 'an authentic-dialogue cannot be pre-packaged and spelt out in detail'. This was a wonderful resource for teachers who were able to work in the experiential paradigm, but very difficult for those who couldn't, and was seen as false teaching by those in the Church who saw all respect for the Tradition being ignored. Fr Fitzpatrick wrote several articles critiquing *Come Alive* as being false teaching and these and the work of others were published privately in a monograph *What's wrong with 'Come Alive'*. As one critic stated 'the 'life-situation' cannot be the source of our religion; someone has to give us that; someone has to preach the Gospel to us and its implications for life' (Fitzpatrick, 1971, p. 98). The language used showed that the various parties were operating out of differing paradigms and with differing understanding of the nature and purpose of the RE

classroom. Those opposing the changes seemed unaware of the changing reality of the secondary classroom as the students and teachers were affected by the anti-Vietnam movements and other political realities. One of the problems of the experiential approach that developed was that experience was limited to the students' reality, and often neglected the experience of the tradition and of the culture and the rich literary, artistic, historic and liturgical resources which expressed this heritage. In the overview to the Melbourne Guidelines (1977) the author had set out the various forms of experience, and had provided an educational framework which attempted to integrate these in a range of learning activities. The content was set out in theological language taken from *The Renewal of the Education of Faith* (1970) and then linked experientially through educational processes. The author often observed that teachers didn't consider the theoretical overview, but simply chose the various activities which they then used within their own learning paradigms. It was this lack of awareness of the changed paradigm set out in the Guidelines and in other resources of this period that limited the possibility of change and led to confusion and division.

Much of the writing of this time was about the nature of religious education. Rummery (1975), who returned to Australia in the mid-seventies from his doctoral studies in England, had identified the differences between catechesis and religious education, and provided examples from both the Australian and European contexts. Rossiter (1978, 1981) identified the various approaches in Australia in all sectors of RE, and in his doctoral thesis described a continuum from 'education in religion' to 'education in faith.' These theoretical frameworks along with the work of overseas scholars provided evidence of emerging paradigms, but it was the work of the next decade to try and bring into balance the focus on the experience of the student and fidelity to a Tradition that had enunciated its story and beliefs and practices within various times and cultures. The emerging paradigm needed to be faithful to both, and also to the increasing multi-cultural nature of Australian society with a public culture that was secular in nature.

1980s and 1990s

School Based Curriculum Development was an important educational framework in Australia in the early eighties. It was considered that a locally developed curriculum based on a general outline from the central authority, would allow teachers to develop material that responded to the specific needs of the diverse population of their school. This paradigm had a student focused approach which respected the cultural and religious reality of the school context. The Sydney secondary guidelines (1984) *Faithful to God: Faithful to People*, with their overview of content and statement of principles, were based on these assumptions of school based planning. Most teachers had insufficient time or expertise to carry out such detailed planning and tended to use material that others had prepared, often for different contexts and with different assumptions about religious development and faith experience.

The author's research on RE teacher planning (Malone, 1990) identified the same difficulties for RE teachers in planning from centrally prepared documents as had been observed in other subject areas by researchers such as Smith (1983) and Deer and Thompson (1987). Postle (1989, pp. 1–2) found that although teachers stated that they valued curriculum statements about 'child-centred' curriculum, they tended to teach the subject from a content focus and use activities prepared by others. His research found that the teachers', and often the schools', paradigm differed from that in the curriculum material. In response to such research, and to formal reviews of the NSW education system in the eighties, a more centralised syllabus approach developed. The student-focused paradigm was reflected in the emphasis on learning outcomes rather than specific subject content. The language of learning outcomes and competencies was itself derived from the economic rationalism paradigm that was dominant in society. In many cases, however, teachers simply saw these outcomes as another form of a list of content.

'Guidelines' Development

The various dioceses developed or revised their guidelines, and included an outcomes based educational model as well as having a strong content focus reflected in a theological framework. The Parramatta Catholic Education Office, for example, published and implemented their guidelines *Sharing Our Story* (1991) and then had a formal review of these (Malone et al., 1996) in preparation for their revision. The approach in *Sharing Our Story* was based on Groome's (1980, 1991) praxis approach. Groome defined the approach in *Sharing Faith* as:

...a participative and dialogical pedagogy in which people reflect critically on their own historical agency in time and place and on their socio-cultural reality, have access together to Christian Story/Vision, and personally appropriate in community with the creative intent of renewed praxis in Christian faith towards God's reign for all creation (1991, p. 135).

Lovat (1991, p. 36), although critical of some applications of the praxis approach, described it as 'by far the most admirable faith forming religious education model available today because of its educational and theological precision'. The precision was there and the opportunity for the critical dimension, but the underlying assumptions of a process carried out by committed Christians raised questions for its use in compulsory RE classrooms where only a limited number of students were practising Catholics. Parramatta diocese was situated in the western suburbs of Sydney, which represented the rapidly changing multicultural society of Australia, where Church attendance was very much on the decrease and in various surveys was shown to be less than 20% of those who named themselves as Catholic.

The development of the curriculum guidelines had been one of the first tasks of the newly formed Religious Education department in the 1980s. A pilot draft was developed and all were involved in a consultative process which led to the

development of the guidelines. This consultative process was very inclusive, and led to a great sense of ownership of the final set of documents. They comprised an overview document and a set of six support documents comprising unit outlines and possible resources for each level of the school. The results of the review revealed a generally positive attitude to the approach used in *Sharing Our Story*. There was some difference in the level of understanding and support for its detailed movements or phases. It was obvious in the contradictory responses given in the survey, and even more in the interviews, that teachers did not understand the approach as it was set out in the curriculum documents. Many considered the framework as simply listings of learning activities that were not necessarily related to an overall process. They did not question the proposed activities in terms of their appropriateness for achieving the sections of the proposed model with their particular class of students.

Their responses highlighted the fact that even something as central as the core model, which had been presented to teachers in both the written material and associated presentations, had not been integrated by them into their own thinking and practice. This theoretical dissonance actually meant that many teachers simply approached the support documents as a source of activities to keep their students occupied, and to comply with the diocesan requirements. They did not make the necessary planning and teaching decisions that would have given them a focus for evaluating the learning processes that were occurring. When asked why they chose to teach a particular topic, a frequent response was that they had no choice, it was set by the religious education coordinator, or, more frequently, it was in the Guidelines.

These issues were further probed in the interviews, which revealed that the documents were not used as educational curriculum documents but more as a source of learning activities. Teachers did not generally recognise that the support units were only a list of suggested activities which might enable them to teach the topic according to the various phases of the Groome's praxis method. Many teachers did not refer to the basic curriculum document, and were not aware of the choices they were making or the basis for their planning and teaching decisions. Teachers generally did not approach these guidelines in the same manner as the syllabus documents provided for the other key learning areas. This was related both to the nature of these documents, and to the tendency for some teachers to view religious education as being very different from other subject areas. In many cases the teachers' background in RE was less than their other teaching areas, although basic qualifications in RE were mandated during this period.

Studies of Religion

As part of the reorganisation of school courses in New South Wales a senior course with an external examination, *Studies of Religion*, was developed and implemented by the New South Wales Board of Studies, which is the government instrumentality responsible for curriculum development. The author was Chair of the Syllabus committee and a senior examiner in the early years of the external examination, and

researched the extent to which the course seemed to achieve its stated outcomes. Many students, in responding to an open ended question as part of this research (Malone, 1996), mentioned that they had gained an insight and understanding into other religions through their study. Several students referred to the value to their own beliefs of studying this course. As one Catholic student said, 'it increased my respect for other traditions and increased my understandings of my own beliefs and practices.' In interviews several Catholic students commented on their renewed interest in studying their own religion because they were able to approach it in a structured way similar to their study of other traditions. Some felt that the teachers presented Catholicism in a more objective way in the *Studies of Religion* course, and that it was not being forced on them as they perceived it had been in earlier years.

The teaching activities and strategies were themselves another important variable in the learning process. Students in the research interviews noted that some teachers focused on the content for the external examination rather than the outcomes of the syllabus. Several students spoke of the large amount of 'handouts' they had to read and learn. In the survey, when students were asked to note activities or experiences that they recalled, the positive responses emphasised those activities that involved them, and included experiences of visiting places and meeting people who had different religious understanding and experiences. The students recognised the importance of the experiential component of their learning. The experiential aspect fulfilled an essential role in the area of changing attitudes and values which were specified as key elements in this course. *Studies of Religion* did not have a focus on faith development, but the external examination and its contribution to the students' university entrance score affected some teachers' ability to appreciate its underlying paradigm, which required focus on students' understanding and attitudes to the multi-faith Australian society and their own search for meaning.

Research Findings

There were several empirical research projects in the 80s and 90s that explored the religious faith outcomes of Catholic Schools in Australia and the contribution of RE to such outcomes. The official discourse set religious practice and personal faith within the Church community as the goal of Catholic education. Flynn (1993) presented a socialisation or inculturation model for the Catholic school, which assumed that the teachers and students formed a community of believers and that the values of home, school and Church were coherent. This vision of the school as a faith community was included in many school mission statements and influenced the underlying paradigm of RE, even though the teachers knew that many of their students experienced the school as their only experience of Church. The challenge of 'integration of faith and culture' in the Roman document *The Catholic School* (1977, par. 44) focused discussion on a paradigm of faith development across all subject areas and not simply in RE, although there was still a strong expectation that the role of RE was to produce practising Catholics in the local Church.

The growing emphasis on content in *Studies of Religion* and the general RE curriculum contributed to a movement towards the development of textbooks and, in some dioceses, the mandating of these. The author carried out some initial research (Malone, 1997) to explore how teachers actually used texts and the extent to which their classroom approaches were consonant with the paradigms underlying the texts. Esler and Esler (1984) in their analysis of primary school teachers' use of curriculum materials identified three roles that teachers adopt. These were *technician*, *manipulator* and *innovator*. Text books as well as curriculum documents can simply be applied by teachers who use them exactly as set out, or can be manipulated by teachers to provide the basis for a learning approach which is significantly different from that envisaged by the developers of the material. Innovators can use materials as a useful starting point for the development of original learning material. The majority of RE teachers in the research sample used the texts as technicians or manipulators to achieve their own goals, and not necessarily within the underlying vision of the texts.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s there had been a movement from the student centred approach to a more structured approach which once more emphasised content. This content was expressed as student learning outcomes, yet there was less awareness of the individual needs and experience of the students. The language of behavioural outcomes did not correlate with the faith development goals of RE in many schools and were difficult to use in the area of attitude and values development. The use of models such as Groome's praxis assumed a level of Church experience and involvement that was not valid for many of the students, and indeed for many of the teachers. The dissonance between the teachers' paradigms and that being set out in the official Church guidelines and text books raised serious questions for effective teaching and learning.

New Millennium: New Paradigm

The Archbishop of Melbourne mandated a new text-based curriculum in 2001. Elliott (2002) notes that the texts maintained the catechetical approach of the earlier Guidelines and used the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (English translation, 1994) as their source of content themes. The content was written in Church rather than educational language although the text books provide activities that were developed in accordance with developing educational understandings. The extent to which these books, which have since been mandated in a revised format for Sydney schools, are used creatively and in terms of the changing learning paradigms is still to be established. The text books reflect a more centralised approach which prescribes doctrinal content. Some diocesan guidelines acknowledge more specifically the changing learning paradigms and the changing social realities and express the content in a way which is more faithful to the twofold fidelity paradigm.

Several metaphors have been used to describe the changing reality of today's classrooms. These acknowledge our global reality. Ellyard suggests a new paradigm that may be in place by the year 2020, which he calls 'Planetism.' He envisages a

society in which national boundaries will be less important than global belonging, which he describes as follows.

As we approach the threshold to a new millennium, we are witnessing the birth of a new planetary culture. A 'century of the planet' is at hand. The Earth is becoming more interdependent and cooperative. This new planetary culture is being moulded by a combination of political, economic, technological and ecological forces of great power which are all working synergistically to create it (Ellyard, 1997, p. 2).

He discusses this development of a global society while acknowledging the paradox of the formation of more and smaller national groups. He emphasises the need to thrive in such a culture rather than simply survive. He draws on earlier metaphors used by economists to describe society as an interdependent spaceship culture rather than a cowboy culture where individualism was the key value. There are a series of values underpinning this changing paradigm which have particular relevance for educators who are faced with the task of educating young people of the 'cowboy culture' so that they can act responsibly as adults within a 'spaceship' global culture. Religious educators have to consider the challenge of how to extend their own and their students' 'circles of concern'.

In past centuries and even today racism and intercultural intolerance was due to the fact that people cared for one kind of humanity such as a particular tribe or religion, but not another. Their circle of concern did not embrace all of humanity. Now the circle is extending further to go across the boundary around our species (Ellyard, 1997).

Religious educators need to examine their curriculum and note what is included within their 'circle of concern', and why. In some Catholic schools the religious education curriculum does not appropriately include other Christian denominations or other religious traditions, even though today's students are living in the midst of a multi-ethnic, multi-faith society. Metaphors of this kind can be used to reappraise the content and underlying paradigms of current text books and guidelines.

Emerging Paradigms

We are at a time in history that is on the cusp of changing social and educational paradigms. There is a great deal of convergence in the theoretical writings in the various fields of learning and curriculum development, and in the discussions of the changing directions of schooling (Hack, 2004). If these writings are an accurate picture of the changing nature of learning and schooling there are serious implications for all the partners involved in the learning process. There will be a need, perhaps, to think of schools as learning centres operating within a range of communities. Perhaps learning activities within the community or on-line with other

agencies will need to be integrated with the activities and experiences occurring in the school centres.

Our existing 'lockstep' system of mass schooling came into being in Western countries as a result of the industrial revolution and resulting urbanisation. The appropriateness of this paradigm is now being challenged. Carneiro (2003, p. 19) states that not only have we moved out of this phase, which he describes as 'clockwork orange', but we are moving through the 'age of knowledge' paradigm with its emphasis on market economics and global communication expressed in outcome-based learning competencies to a new humanism which he calls a 'learning society'. In this paradigm learning needs to be customised to respond to the needs of individuals and also be part of learning communities. Learning is constructed from experience and builds on existing knowledge. Shepard (2000) notes:

From cognitive theory we have also learned that existing knowledge structures and beliefs work to enable or impede new learning, that intelligent thought involves self monitoring and awareness about when and how to use skills, and that 'expertise' develops in a field of study as a principled and coherent way of thinking and representing problems not just as an accumulation of information (Shepard, 2000, p. 10).

If learning is to occur it is important that those developing the programs/activities are aware of the existing knowledge and beliefs of their students, and that opportunity is provided for students to critically reflect on the experiences they have, and to integrate these into the cognitive frameworks offered within the formal study of the associated discipline. School learning needs to be connected to the world outside, and to the values inherent in the various processes, so that the learners can develop appropriate cognitive structures.

Tacey (2000, p. 11) describes a movement in Australian society and churches towards fundamentalism and 'religious fanaticism and intolerance' and presents the challenge to education 'as long as it can break free from the old rationalistic mode' to assist students in their personal search for meaning and for an investigation of spirituality in the broader sense. Tacey (2000, p. 228–229) also identifies a paradigm shift in Western culture in which the old cultural form is often named religion, and the new equated with spirituality. The old is considered to be dualistic, hierarchical, patriarchal and authoritarian, which emphasise a transcendental approach. Religious educators need to integrate the search for the spiritual within a formal study of religion and its expressions across time and cultures.

Religious education needs to develop learning that is connected to the real world and desires of the students. Content and process need to respond to these realities and not simply use theological frameworks that were developed in response to former issues or credal formulations. The content and language of the Tradition is an important dimension of the learning process within this discipline, but the skilled educator will help the student to select material and interact with it in a meaningful way. Guidelines and textbooks need to provide resources and activities that assist teachers to work within this paradigm of meaning making.

Learning Theories

Beare (2001, p. 158) speaks about learning being *in* and *about* the community as he describes the school of the future. The school as a learning centre needs to be part of the various expressions of the community and to find ways to involve older members of the community as mentors for the learners, as well as provide ways for the young people to learn within the context of their local and broader community. Learning in religious education about ritual, service and various expressions of ethical behaviour could occur in some form of interactive ways with local religious communities. Challenges to reconceptualise our approach to learning in religious education come not only from new ways of envisaging the school as a place for learning, but also from developing understandings of the nature of learning itself. If we take seriously the constructivist approach to learning, we will accept that the individual is the only person who can construct his/her own meaning. Beare suggests that we focus on creating 'clades'; living organisms from which new forms can evolve, rather than clones, which reproduce the existing approaches but have no power to generate the new in response to the changing context (Beare, 2001, p. 37). Students today will be part of a society, a Church we cannot even imagine, so religious education has to provide them with the means to develop so that they can make meaning at each phase of their lives.

Some of the key principles being discussed within the field of 'brain theory' offer new insights into the learning process. White (2003, pp. 18–24) maintains that pedagogy, the emphasis on the learning process, has been neglected in the various RE paradigms. He develops a DDEP pedagogy for RE with four themes: *Discernment, Enrichment, Engagement, and Participation*. In each of these he explores pedagogies that take cognisance of the findings of brain theory and recent developments in curriculum planning. His model respects the nature of the learning process from the perspective of the learner within a social context, and thus provides the teacher with a framework that can promote true learning. He challenges the religious educator to move beyond the transmission model and to 'embrace a pedagogical practice that combines explicit focused teaching with processes that empower the learners to construct their own insights and meanings from the learning encounter' (2003, p. 23). He does not neglect the importance of the content of the tradition in the process and also notes that 'a variety of pedagogical approaches need to interact concurrently in the religious education classroom if each individual is to meaningfully encounter their faith tradition and, in the process, construct their individual understandings and relationships with God' (2003, p. 24).

In this paradigm the brain is presented as a parallel processor where thought, intuitions, attitudes and emotions operate simultaneously with other modes of information. True learning therefore engages the whole of the person. Search for meaning is presented as occurring through 'patterning' and involves specific organisation and categorisation of information. Emotions are involved in this process of patterning, and indeed it is not possible to separate the affective, cognitive and psychomotor dimensions of the learning processes. The brain simultaneously perceives and

creates parts and wholes, so it is not valid for us to continue to plan the learning process through the use of discrete categories and dichotomies. Learning always involves conscious and unconscious processes. Meaning often happens intuitively in ways we don't consciously understand. As educators we need to make information come alive in the minds of learners, and recognise that each brain is unique, and although we have some things in common we all have our own way of learning. White (2004, p. 34) reported in his research that one of the participants stated 'enrichment, engagement and participation may make a lesson seem effective, but it is not really effective until it generates opportunities for religious meaning to emerge.' This emphasis on meaning making is the focus of the paradigm emerging from various starting points as identified by Hack's (2004) research and needs to be integrated into classroom processes. Rossiter (2003) puts forward an argument for an emerging approach that integrates spirituality, meaning and identity issues for young people.

In a country where the description of public education usually included the three terms 'free', 'compulsory' and 'secular', there is ongoing evidence for the perceived need for a holistic approach which respects the search for meaning and the spiritual. The Australian College of Education Report describes this search in the following terms:

Because a spiritual frame of reference enhances an understanding of the world, and because education is never value-free, schools are expected to cultivate the natural reverence and wonder in young people, to help them explore why they believe what they believe, and to give them the capacity to analyse their own world-view and those of others (2001, p. 4).

Catholic schools have always claimed to give a high priority to religious education which provides an explicit focus on these values. They now face the challenge to identify the extent to which their formal and informal programs promote this search for meaning and the spiritual, and have not simply become enmeshed in theological discourse that may seem irrelevant to both their students and teachers.

Conclusion

A journey through Australian Catholic RE classrooms of the past forty years reveals that teachers and the broader Church community are still struggling with the core questions as to the actual purpose of these classes, and their relationship to the life of the local Church and the development of the faith of the students. These varying expectations, which are often in direct conflict, limit the integration of appropriate learning paradigms into the classroom context in a changing society within a global reality. Teachers and administrators at times operate out of earlier paradigms, which were not necessarily coherent or in keeping with the needs of the students or the community. If the classroom is recognised as a privileged but limited focus for one aspect of a life long learning process it may be possible for the learning paradigm

of meaning making to be used in a creative way that respects the needs of the students and the wisdom of the Tradition.

Today's teachers, like their counterparts in the 70s, are called to the two-fold fidelity that respects both of these realities. This requires religious educators to be able to appreciate and, to a certain extent, understand both the socio-cultural reality of their students and the teachings and expressions of the religious traditions they teach. If they are able to speak both these languages then they can draw on appropriate resources in a manner that engages the students and provides them with the opportunity to be religiously literate and to draw on this skill in their personal search for meaning. The learning processes support the students in their development of a growing understanding and respect for the religious responses of their own community and that of others to fundamental questions about life, death and meaning.

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TEXTBOOKS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Michael T. Buchanan

Religious Education, Australian Catholic University

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the use of textbooks in religious education. It draws on the experience of implementing a uniform textbook series in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia. The chapter first outlines the context and background of the development of the *To Know Worship and Love* textbook series; second, presents a broad overview of some literature concerning textbooks in education; third, provides a critical summary of some the literature concerning textbooks in religious education; and fourth, reports on specific research into the *To Know Worship and Love* series, including the use of the textbooks by teachers and the management of the change to the textbook series. The chapter finally draws universal implications for the use and role of textbooks in religious education.

Context and Background

Despite the importance of textbooks in education, no systematic research on the use of textbooks in religious education has been undertaken from an international perspective (Britton & Woodard, 1993, p. viii). In the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia, the introduction of a particular religious education textbook, the *To Know Worship and Love* series, has led to the adoption of this series by Catholic Archdioceses and dioceses in many other parts of Australia.

In 1998 the former Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Archbishop Pell (1996–2001), set up an Episcopal Vicariate for Religious Education. The purpose of the Episcopal Vicariate was to produce a series of religious education textbooks for use in Catholic schools and parishes in the Archdiocese. In 1998 the production of the series of textbooks commenced.

The intention was to produce a religious education textbook for each year of primary and secondary education and to mandate these for all children who attended

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. By 2002 the textbooks for the *To Know Worship and Love* series were introduced in Catholic primary and secondary schools from preparatory level through to Year 10. (In Australia primary school extends from the ages of five to twelve, and secondary school from approximately thirteen to eighteen. Although compulsory schooling ends at Year Ten most students continue their education to the completion of Year Twelve.) In 2002 a committee was formed to produce the Year 11 and 12 components of the *To Know Worship and Love* series. By 2005 a Year 11 edition, *To Know, Worship and Love: Catholic Ethical Thinking for Senior Secondary Students*, was introduced in Melbourne Catholic schools, and planning for the Year 12 component was underway.

Upon completion of the Year 7–10 textbooks Archbishop Pell formally authorised the textbooks and directed that they be used in all levels in Catholic schools ‘as the essential resources for religious education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne’ (Pell, 2001, p. 5). In 2002 the next Archbishop of Melbourne, Dennis Hart, reaffirmed Pell’s mandate for a text-based curriculum to be used at all year levels in all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne (Hart, 2002, p. 6).

Since the phasing out of the *My Way to God* textbook series in the 1960s no uniform textbook had been mandated for use in the Archdiocese. This series of religious education textbooks had been based on the ‘kerygmatic’ or ‘proclamation’ approach to religious education which had prevailed through most of the 1960s (Jungmann, 1957). For approximately thirty years a life-centred experiential approach (Amalorpavadass, 1973, p. 19) influenced the teaching of religious education and was enshrined in the *Guidelines for Religious Education of Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne (Guidelines)* (Catholic Education Office, Melbourne, 1995, 1984, 1973). *Guidelines* (1973, 1984 & 1995) was based on a life-centred approach to religious education. It emphasised a catechetical approach and context in religious education, which emanated from reflection on personal experience, and assumed that this would lead the student to the discovery of God’s presence and action in life. The curriculum schema was founded on four interactive elements aimed at helping students to reflect on their experience as a means to encountering and understanding the Christian tradition. This was commonly known in the Archdiocese of Melbourne as the ‘four-point plan’.

Four point plan:

1. Experience Shared (We share our experiences)
 2. Reflection Deepened (We reflect together)
 3. Faith Expressed (We come to know our Catholic faith)
 4. Insights reinforced (We gain further insights and respond)
- (Catholic Education Office Melbourne, 1995, pp. 27–29)

During this period in many Catholic schools in Melbourne, textbooks and a documented curriculum in religious education were not key features of the life-centred approach (Engelbreton, 2002, p. 39). The absence of textbooks in religious education meant that many under-qualified teachers of the discipline in the

Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese had no comprehensive curriculum guide, and did not gain experience in the contribution that a good textbook can make to teaching and learning in this subject. The *To Know Worship and Love* textbooks marked a watershed in the approach to be taken regarding teaching and learning in religious education. The textbooks were directed for use in the Archdiocese with 'a distinctive emphasis on the cognitive dimension of learning, that is, on knowing the content of Catholic teaching on faith and morals' (Pell, 2001, p. 5). The transition from a life-centred focus to a knowledge-centred text-based catechetical approach has provided the impetus for discussion about the use of textbooks in religious education. A general outline of the literature concerning textbooks in education will provide a background for this discussion, given the limited use of religious education textbooks for approximately three decades in Melbourne.

Literature Concerning Textbooks in Education

Some literature regarding textbooks concerns areas such as the position of textbooks in contemporary classrooms; teacher reliance on textbooks; assessment of the quality of textbooks; selection criteria choosing a textbook. The issues surrounding the part textbooks play in education offer some insights that can be applied to the use of textbooks in religious education.

The Position of Textbooks in a Contemporary Classroom

Instructional innovations such as radio, television, programmed learning, multi-media packages and language laboratories and other information technologies have challenged the position of textbooks in education (Gopinathan, 1989, p. 62). However, mass communication techniques, including information technologies, have not replaced textbooks (Ferning, McDougal & Ohlman, 1989). They have, nevertheless, contributed to redefining of the context in which textbooks are used. 'The notion of the textbook as a single, stand alone tool for teaching and learning appears to be outmoded' (Ferning et al., 1989, p. 204). However, the textbook has remained the preferred teaching and learning option for most teachers (Britton & Woodard, 1993). Hirsch (1996) argued that a well-written textbook was the most effective resource to learn subject matter (p. 269). While textbooks remain the preferred option the literature suggests that teacher reliance on textbooks differs.

Teacher Reliance on Textbooks

Britton and Woodard (1993) have indicated that the degree to which teachers rely on textbooks varies. They suggested that beginner teachers are likely to rely heavily on textbooks in comparison to experienced teachers (p. viii). According to Vespoor (1989) the actual use and interaction with textbooks and teacher manuals can help teachers to develop confidence and mastery over a subject, and help to improve the quality of learning and teaching (pp. 53–55). Reliance on textbooks can be

considered a vehicle by which to gain professional competencies in the learning and teaching process.

Textbooks appear to be popular resources with teachers because they are non-threatening and are comparatively inexpensive as well as easy to maintain (Vespoor, 1989, p. 56). Woodard and Elliot (1993) argued that textbooks dominate the classroom, despite the impact of other forms of media and learning resources. Tyson and Woodward (1989) have indicated that 75% to 95% of classroom instruction is organised around textbooks (pp. 14–17). While textbooks, according to Vespoor (1989) contribute to the quality of education, Marsh (1997) asserts that a textbook itself has no significance until a teacher and student interact with it (p. 84).

Tyson-Bernstein (1989) argued that ‘textbooks compensate for the weaknesses of teachers’ (p. 74). Rossiter (2000) has commented on the important role the teacher plays in the teaching and learning process and has suggested that the textbook can act as an ‘insurance policy against poor teaching’ (p. 13). Crawford and Carnine (2000) suggested that well designed textbooks accommodate atypical learners from both ends of the spectrum (p. 387). Others have commented on the value of high quality textbooks and their place in the learning and teaching process, but they insist that the most important factor in gaining high quality learning from textbooks is the skills and competence of the teacher (Crotty & Crotty, 2000, p. 23; Finlay, 2000, p. 50; Reilly, 1998, p. 137; Rossiter, 2000, p. 13; Thomas, 2000, p. 50).

Assessing the Quality of Textbooks

Issitt (2004) has observed the difficulty in assessing the quality of textbooks. He suggested that there ‘is such a wide range of uses for the textbook, from garage manual to classroom aid, that a typology of uses offers little analytical consistency’ (p. 685). However, when assessing the quality of a textbook, Vespoor (1989) suggested that a textbook should not be judged in isolation from the factors that interact with the teaching program. ‘All elements of a program—teachers, texts and teaching methods—must be congruous and at the same developmental stage’ (p. 53). For example, a good textbook used by a competent teacher can be a very effective teaching and learning resource. The same textbook in the hands of an unskilled teacher may not be used as effectively. A textbook may be judged inappropriate if it is not considered in the context of the other elements of the learning and teaching program.

Selection Criteria for Choosing a Textbook

Issitt (2004) has indicated that the selection criteria used for textbooks ‘exposes deep-seated assumptions about the relationship of the learner to the teacher, of the learner to the author, of the learner to structures of knowledge and of the learner to the power relations in society’ (pp. 684–685). Neumann (1989) researched the selection criteria applied to textbooks used in France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. For some countries and states the

criteria were applied at the production stage of the textbook, and publishers were required to follow a particular process (see also Gopinathan, 1989, pp. 66–67). Alternatively, in other countries and states the criteria were applied after publication at the selection stage. According to Marsh (1997) principals, teachers, students and authors preferred to select textbooks that contain the following criteria.

What principals expect:

- Up-to-date content;
- Material that is easy to understand;
- Relatively cheap to purchase.

What teachers expect:

- A core of important learning;
- Some new content or rearranged content;
- New ideas about organising their teaching;
- Up-dated resource lists;
- An up-to-date summary on a particular topic;
- Instruction on basic skills.

What students expect:

- Information that is easy to understand;
- Information that is an up-to-date summary on a particular topic;
- Material that is directly related to the syllabus and the examinations that they have to pass;
- Instruction on basic skills.

What authors expect:

- That they can present up-to-date information in an interesting way;
- That their textbook is unique and special;
- That teachers and students will recognise its usefulness and use it in class (1997, p. 86).

While textbooks may be used and interacted with in many different ways, the expectations of a textbook are constant across the key interest groups (Marsh, 1997, pp. 84–87). Carnine (1991) suggested that textbook selection criteria might help authors to redesign textbooks to make them more effective and efficient teaching tools.

Considerations about the position of textbooks, teacher reliance, textbook quality and selection criteria for textbooks in education have informed the discussion in Australia concerning textbooks in religious education. The following section of this chapter provides an overview of some of the literature concerning textbooks in religious education, which has emanated from the introduction of the Church-sponsored textbook series *To Know, Worship and Love*.

Literature Concerning Textbooks in Religious Education

Qualities of a Good Religious Education Textbook

The decision to introduce a Church-sponsored textbook series for use in all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, and the research that has emanated from this decision, has contributed to a growth in Australian literature regarding the use of textbooks in religious education.

Some Australian literature has suggested that high quality textbooks in religious education can help to encourage interaction between the learner and the content. Rossiter (2000) suggested that a good textbook should be judged by the extent to which it engages the learner through encouraging 'interaction between learner and content' (p. 13). The quality of a textbook in religious education is sometimes compared to the quality of textbooks in other disciplines. In a secondary school learners are generally enrolled in a range of subjects, and in many cases interact with a variety of textbooks from various disciplines. Students in such situations are likely to consciously or unconsciously make comparisons between the qualities of various textbooks. According to Rossiter (2000), inferior quality textbooks in religious education can devalue attitudes towards the study of religion.

If student texts in religion are not comparable in the quality of production then they will immediately give students an impression of being deficient, and this can reinforce negative views of religious education (Rossiter, 2000, p. 14).

Thomas (2000) suggested that teachers of religious education in Catholic schools teach across a range of disciplines, and therefore are also in a position to make comparisons and judgements between the qualities of textbooks from various fields.

While the layout and presentation of a religious education textbook may influence the judgements made about the quality of the textbook, other factors are also important. Factors such as the philosophical and/or educational approach underpinning the textbook may also come into play when making judgements about the quality of the text. Rossiter (2000) has noted that, 'new student texts in humanities emphasise a critical inquiring approach to education' (p. 15). He argued that such an approach to teaching and learning is appropriate to teaching and learning in religious education, where areas of theology, scripture, world religions and contemporary spiritual and moral issues are covered in the curriculum (p. 15). The task of a good textbook is to inform the learner and to provide incentives 'for inquiry and discussion and the threads of continuity in the study' (Rossiter, 2000, p. 16). Rossiter (2000) also argued that religious education textbooks are less effective if their aim is to promote personal commitment, but acknowledged that content focused textbooks can stimulate opportunities for personal reflection and possible transformation (this issue is addressed in the following sub-section of this chapter).

The text is there to provide content for critical examination and reflection. If the content/issue is important enough it will naturally have components that are belief and value oriented, and personal (Rossiter, 2000, p. 15).

The task of an effective textbook in religious education is to be informative and the presentation of the textbook may help to provide the impetus for learner inquiry and critique or discussion (Rossiter, 2000, p. 16).

A good quality textbook could help teachers and students to achieve excellence in religious education. Textbooks can offer a range of strategies and skills that can be used to engage students in the learning process. Reflecting on her experience as a textbook writer, Engebretson (2000) suggested that through the use of textbooks students could gain or develop the following skills: comprehension, application, analysis, critique and evaluation, reflection, contemplation, intuition and creativity (p. 28).

In the secondary school context Engebretson (2000, pp. 28–32) has identified the following characteristics as indicative of a good religious education textbook.

1. A good textbook opens up historical, cultural, scriptural, liturgical and ethical riches in a way that respects the student's intellectual and psychological development.
2. Students are given access to the best current developments in scriptural and theological scholarship, and these are used either as particular methodologies in the text, or included as part of the information on a given topic.
3. Unless it is intended for use in only the narrowest of contexts, a good religious education text acknowledges diversity of religious commitment, ranging from unbelief to belief, and the many positions in between.
4. It attempts to engage the student at the intellectual and personal/reflective levels.
5. A good religious education text provides highly specific information and gives more than enough information in any given topic.
6. Numerous choices are given in the form of activities, research assignments, discussion topics, revision questions, quizzes, and activities, which use the student's creative capacities.
7. A good religious education textbook is visually attractive.
8. A good religious education textbook acknowledges the role played by information technology in education, and assists students to use this technology to find out more about topics under consideration (p. 29).

A good religious education textbook has the potential to not only act as a sound educational tool, but may also have the potential to transform the learner's view of the world in the religious realm.

The Cognitive and Transformative Potential of Religious Education Textbooks

Some Australian literature has suggested that a good religious education textbook could promote cognitive intellectual learning, as well as have the potential to appeal to affective and transformative education (Mudge, 2000; Dwyer, 2000; Ryan, 2000). Mudge (2000) has suggested that there has been a tendency for educators and textbook writers to overemphasise the cognitive or intellectual dimensions of

using and producing textbooks in religious education, as opposed more affective dimensions. He argued that presenting the cognitive and affective dimensions of learning in opposition to each other could limit the potential of a good religious education textbook. Mudge (2000) suggested that religious educators and text writers should incorporate both, and that such an approach was the hallmark of a good religious education textbook.

A good RE text encourages aesthetic attitudes of both critical distance and immediate involvement; objective disinterest and close, passionate intimacy; transcendence and immanence; contemplation and concrete praxis (Mudge, 2000, p. 3).

Dwyer (2000) suggested that good religious education textbooks do more than impart knowledge, when the teacher and learner interact with the textbook.

The material has to be faithful to the teaching of the Church; it has to help the teacher achieve the aims of the local RE syllabus; it has to suit the students; and it has to bring some joy and enthusiasm into the work of the teachers and those who are learning with them (Dwyer, 2000, pp. 17–18).

The transformative potential of a good religious education textbook can be viewed from the perspective of the role the teacher plays in text-based learning.

Religious Education Textbooks and the Teacher

Reilly (1998) argued that it was the teacher or the ‘teacher’s heart that brings to life any RE textbook or programme’ (p. 137) and that it was the ‘teacher who transforms the syllabus from a dead letter into a living experience of the faith’ (p. 137). Mudge (2000) added to the argument by suggesting that the features of a religious education textbook also contributed to such a position. From the perspective of hermeneutics, Mudge (2000) argued that a textbook is not restricted to ‘cognitive critique and note-learning’ (p. 5) but is a resource to be interacted with.

The text can only come alive with its full power when it takes account of and wrestles with the whole social, historical, aesthetic, psychological and other ‘worlds’ surrounding the subject and the reader (Mudge, 2000, p. 5).

Dwyer (2000) suggested that ‘textbooks are best seen as tools that assist rather than define the teaching of RE [religious education]’ (p. 17). Good textbooks are able to help teachers identify a particular curriculum ideology which teachers can convey to students through the teaching and learning activities in which they are able to engage students (Ryan, 2000, p. 20). Textbooks in religious education help the teacher to understand the ‘thinking about religious education and the theological understandings and nuances that were current when it was written’ (Engebretson, 2000, p. 28). Rymarz (2000) suggested that the religious education textbook series used in the Melbourne Archdiocese was an ‘attempt to provide up-to-date religious

education materials which spring from the renewal of the post Conciliar period' (p. 43). Up to date textbooks also help to assimilate with current thinking and approaches to religious education.

In addition, a good textbook enables a teacher to interact with it, and to use their authority to design a curriculum appropriate for the students. However, the ability of the teacher to make such curriculum decisions can be compromised by their own background and/or expertise in religious education.

Even when it is required that teachers of religious education are accredited and have completed a certain amount of professional development, many still feel that they teach religious education because the school expects it rather than because of their competence in the discipline. This makes the situation difficult for making curriculum choices (Thomas, 2000, p. 5).

While textbooks are able to play an important role in assisting the teacher in the development of high quality curriculum in religious education, Finlay (2000) has suggested that this is not the only relevant factor, and that consideration should be given to the competencies of the teacher.

Textbooks are not the only answer to the question of what sort of religious education is needed today. The quality of teachers is obviously still of prime importance. And religious education teachers need good grounding in scripture, theology and the theory of religious education/catechesis as well as an awareness of the culture and spirituality of children and young people (Finlay, 2000, p. 60).

The competencies of the teacher have a significant impact on how well a religious education textbook is used. It is the teacher who controls the learning experience by deciding the content and methodology appropriate to a particular class. A textbook in this context can be viewed as a tool in the hands of the teacher (Engebretson, 2002, p. 44). If teachers have no understanding of the theoretical framework in which the textbook was written then the chance of it being used out of context increases. Thus while textbooks can help to provide teachers with relevant content and activities they cannot correct certain views about religious education and its purpose that teachers may bring to the classroom.

Religious Education Textbooks and the Student

While the use of religious education textbooks by the teacher of religious education can have a significant impact on the curriculum, Crotty and Crotty (2000) have considered the possible influence that student interaction with textbooks in religious education may have on the curriculum. While the teacher may at first skilfully manipulate and mediate the content of the religious education textbook, the student also interacts with the textbook at a level that incorporates his or her own biographical, cultural and religious persuasion.

The conclusion to these reflections is that what is transmitted as worthwhile knowledge for the student in the classroom is not necessarily what is in the curriculum. Nor is the knowledge in a textbook necessarily transmitted in the classroom. Even what a teacher interprets from a curriculum and textbook may not be transmitted since students are capable of effective resistance (Crotty & Crotty, 2000, p. 24).

Ryan (2000) has argued that good textbooks in religious education provide opportunities for students to interact with the content of textbooks through comparison and inquiry. He also argued that good textbooks in religious education can promote an understanding that religious education has similar educational requirements as other curriculum areas (p. 22). Rossiter (2000) argued that a good textbook in religious education could enable a student to learn, despite poor quality teaching.

Even when religion teachers have little background in religious education, or where teachers may be unmotivated, the possibility of placing good materials in the hands of students ensures that they will have a better chance of learning effectively about the topic (Rossiter, 2000, p. 13).

A good religious education textbook can give a student an informed understanding of the religious tradition under investigation, as well as help students to 'gain skills in informed critical thinking about the tradition, about religious history and literature including the sacred texts associated with a particular religion (Engebretson, 2000, p. 40).

Two reports have suggested that the implementation of the *To Know Worship and Love* textbook series have improved learning and teaching in religious education in Catholic schools throughout the Archdiocese of Melbourne (Engebretson & Rymarz 2002, 2003).

To know Worship and Love: Reports 2002 and 2004

Background

Engebretson and Rymarz (2002 & 2003) have reported on the implementation and use of the Church-sponsored textbooks *To Know, Worship and Love*. Their reports involved collecting data from approximately three hundred Year 7–10 teachers of religious education in Catholic schools. The contributions of their findings to the Australian literature concerning textbooks in religious education are based on the experiences of those teachers involved in the use and implementation of the *To Know Worship and Love* series. As noted earlier in this chapter, by 2002 the textbooks were implemented into all Catholic secondary schools in Melbourne after almost three decades of 'textbook free' teaching in religious education. The report suggested that the textbooks were a welcomed resource. This was indicated by the high and consistent level of use of the textbook in the teaching and learning process (Engebretson & Rymarz, 2002, p. 7).

Findings from the 2002 and 2004 Research.

The reports also indicated that the majority of teachers used the textbooks frequently in class. Frequent use of the textbook was understood to be at least one in every three lessons of religious education. There did not appear to be a significant discrepancy regarding the frequency of textbook use between experienced and inexperienced teachers (Engebretson & Rymarz, 2002, p. 7). The frequency of use of the textbook was not affected by the formal qualifications of the teachers. 'Among those with no formal training, 61% used the textbooks every lesson or weekly, while among the more highly qualified this frequency of use was 67.3% (Engebretson & Rymarz, 2002, p. 7).

The inclusion of the textbooks in the Year 7–10 teaching and learning program in Catholic secondary schools had led to an increased treatment of the depth of content and amount of content taught across the year levels (Engebretson & Rymarz, 2002, p. 8; Engebretson & Rymarz, 2004, p. 8). In addition, the use of textbooks had not added to teacher preparation time. The amount of teacher preparation time remained constant for experienced teachers and slightly reduced the amount of preparation time for inexperienced teachers. Inexperienced teachers had a higher dependency on the use of the textbook, and the use of the textbook had also reduced the amount of time used to prepare lessons (Engebretson and Rymarz, 2002, p. 14).

The reports also showed that improvement had occurred in the areas of the amount and quality of independent learning in the classroom, and the amount and quality of assessment given to students. The teachers on the whole indicated that there had been an improvement in their teaching of religious education and an improvement in the student's attitude towards religious education (Engebretson & Rymarz, 2002, p. 16).

The majority of the Religious Education Coordinators (Curriculum Leaders) claimed that the quality of the religious education curriculum had improved greatly as a result of the implementation of the textbook series, *To Know Worship and Love*. In contrast to the teachers of religious education, the Religious Education Coordinators claimed that the introduction and use of the textbooks had increased their workload significantly. Engebretson and Rymarz (2002) suggested 'this is to be expected, as curriculum leaders they would have had responsibility for the oversight of the implementation of the series' (p. 20).

When innovations are represented in religious education textbooks, the adoption of these innovations is likely to have an impact on development or changes in curriculum and curriculum approaches. The introduction of Church-sponsored textbooks in religious education from preparatory level through to Year 10 in the Archdiocese of Melbourne has led to the occurrence of 'a drastic change in the content of the RE curriculum' (Crotty & Crotty, 2000, p. 23). Crotty and Crotty (2000) suggested that the content of the Melbourne Archdiocese textbooks 'should entice RE educators to look once again at the question of what should be taught and why' (p. 23). Questions relating to what should be taught and why are underpinned by questions relating to 'how?'. Textbooks in religious education have an implied pedagogical approach. The content of the Church sponsored textbook series in the Archdiocese of Melbourne has an implied understanding of how the content should be taught. The authors of the Year 7–10 textbooks presented the content of the

textbooks within a typological framework (Engebretson, 2002, pp. 40–41) based on Habel and Moore's (1982) typological approach, which they had developed from Smart's (1998) phenomenological approach. The Church-sponsored religious education textbooks in the Archdiocese of Melbourne proposed a particular approach to teaching that was fundamentally educational and encouraged a critical inquiring approach (Engebretson, 2002, pp. 40–44). Rymarz (2000) has also commented on the potential of the Church-sponsored textbook to change the approach to religious education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne (pp. 42–43).

According to Ryan (2000) textbooks in religious education can make significant contributions to the development of curriculum in this field.

Good textbooks can convey an appropriate curriculum ideology with clarity and consistency across a system; provide teachers with subject matter upon which to create imaginative learning activities; engage students with printed resources which encourage comparison and inquiry; and present to students an image of a curriculum area with similar requirements and validity as other curriculum areas (Ryan, 2000, p. 22).

Textbooks in religious education can be viewed as tools that assist teachers in the development of course content and curriculum focus. For a teacher who is not familiar with content of a religious education curriculum, a good textbook can help the teacher develop an appropriate curriculum (Dwyer, 2000, p. 17).

Experts in the field generally design textbooks and a teacher can use them to design and modify the curriculum to suit his/her particular class (Thomas, 2000, p. 54)

Implications for the use and Role of Textbooks in Religious Education

Implications for the use and role of textbooks in religious education can be considered against the backdrop of literature concerning textbooks in education and religious education, as well as the implementation of the uniform textbook series in the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia.

Textbooks have remained the preferred teaching option for classroom teaching regardless of the mass production of communication techniques and technologies (Copinathan, 1989; Ferning, McDougal & Ohlman, 1989; Hirsch, 1996; Woodard & Elliot, 1993). The trend in the Catholic dioceses and archdioceses in the eastern states of Australia suggests that uniform textbooks in religious education are the preferred learning and teaching option. Teachers tend to rely on textbooks to varying degrees (Britton & Woodard, 1993), however, teacher use and interaction with textbooks contributes to teacher confidence and mastery over a subject, and can help to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Vespoor, 1989). The use of textbooks in religious education would be particularly beneficial in the discipline of religious education, where many teachers are likely to lack qualifications and inexperience (Thomas, 2000).

While it is difficult to assess the quality of a textbook given the wide range of uses (Issitt, 2004), when considering a textbook in the context of the factors that interact with the textbook (students, teachers, programme, pedagogy) judgements can be made about its particular appropriateness (Vespoor, 1989). Suitability can be measured fittingly when key interest groups are in agreement regarding the quality or criteria of a particular textbook (Marsh, 1997).

In particular, insights regarding the use and role of religious education textbooks stem from the literature surrounding the implementation of *To Know Worship and Love* in Catholic schools in Melbourne. This literature was predominantly concerned with the use of textbooks in a system of schools that fosters a catechetical approach to religious education. The quality of textbooks in religious education should be of a high standard. Students and teachers sometimes compare them with textbooks from other disciplines (Rossiter, 2000; Thomas, 2002). Good quality religious education textbooks can be used to achieve excellence in teaching and learning (Engebretson, 2000). The *To Know Worship and Love* textbook series raised concerns regarding the extent to which a textbook emphasises cognitive learning, and simultaneously socialises students within a particular faith tradition (Dwyer, 2000; Mudge, 2000; Ryan, 2000). Textbooks are not stand-alone learning instruments. The role of the teacher is integral to using knowledge-centred textbooks within a catechetical religious education model (Finlay, 2000; Reilly, 1998; Thomas, 2000). Religious education textbooks also help students to organise religious data and critique religious knowledge (Engebretson, 2000). Textbooks in religious education can be used to create a degree of independence from the teacher in the learning and teaching process (Ryan, 2000) as well as enable students to learn, even despite poor quality teaching (Rossiter, 2000).

Good quality textbooks also provide insights into current pedagogical approaches to religious education. They provide a guide for the development of curriculum as well as impact on teacher preparation time (Engebretson & Rymarz, 2002, 2004).

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A SHARED PRAXIS APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Dr. Thomas H. Groome

Director, BC's Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry

Simple but not Simplistic

I was once making a presentation in Vilnius, Lithuania, on a shared praxis approach to religious education. At the first break time my interpreter, Birute, reported to me that the participants were finding my proposal very strange, indeed. Among other things, they had negative associations with the term 'praxis'; their Soviet occupiers, only recently departed, had used it liberally. So Birute asked, 'Tom, what do you really mean by a shared praxis approach?' I responded, 'Birute, it is alarmingly simple. It's a pedagogy that encourages people to bring their lives to their Faith and their Faith to their lives—to integrate the two into a lived and living faith.' Birute broke into a smile and said, 'Why don't I tell them so.' When she did, there was instant recognition as if we'd all come to see the obvious.

My Lithuanian friends still refer to it as a 'life to faith to life' approach and I'm grateful to them for bringing me to such clarity. After writing some long books about it and many years of trying to teach and model this approach I'm happy to present it with such a simple formula. I hasten to add, however, that it is far from simplistic or easy to do. It requires real intentionality and some deep convictions of the religious educator. Teachers need to appropriate it as what Thomas Aquinas called a *habitus*—an intentional style that is done reflectively each time, not just a skill performed by routine. So yes, it is simple, but also demanding and profound. After some thirty years of trying to do it consistently throughout my own work and ministry I still consider myself a novice. I marvel at how often I do it poorly and am ever learning how to do it better.

'Bringing life to faith and faith to life' suggests a heuristic framework for how a religious educator might craft an intentional teaching/learning event, the pedagogical moves to make at the beginning, the middle, and the end. Yet, as I elaborate later, the sequencing of its movements has great flexibility, with the possibility of

many variations and combinations. Far more constitutive than the movements are the commitments and attitudes that undergird them, and the approach in general. Anyone aspiring to take this approach must commit to creating a community of conversation among participants, to actively engage them as agents of their own and each other's learning, to invite them to expression and critical reflection in dialogue with each other, to lend them ready access to traditions of spiritual wisdom and identity in faith, to encourage them to appropriate this wisdom, and invite them to decisions for their lives. These commitments must be constant throughout the teaching-learning event more than sequential, with the teacher encouraging community, active engagement, expression, reflection, accessing, appropriating and decision-making throughout and not simply at particular moments.

It is some twenty-five years since I published *Christian Religious Education* (1980) and almost fifteen since *Sharing Faith* (1991), the more complete statement of a shared praxis approach. Over the years, people have used it in a great variety of contexts and across a wide spectrum of faith communities; from study of world religions in public school curricula to Sunday schools and parish programs intent on faith formation, from Unitarian Universalists to Southern Baptists. Many Catholic basal curricula reflect its principles and movements, most evidently the two I have written myself, but also many other catechetical series throughout the English-speaking world (See the *God With Us* religion series, (K to 8) from W. H. Sadlier (New York), and the *Coming to Faith* series, (K to 6), likewise from Sadlier). Its principles are reflected in the pedagogy of many catechumenate programs, and in various movements that encourage faith sharing in small groups. Authors writing about other functions of ministry, especially preaching and pastoral counselling, have adapted a shared praxis approach to their purposes, and many have appreciated its dynamics as a way of 'doing' practical or pastoral theology.

Its foundational conviction—that religious education should promote the integration of life and Faith—is repeated throughout the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997), a document that expresses the official 'mind' of the Catholic Church on faith education. Methodologically, the *Directory* calls for 'a correct... correlation and interaction between profound human experiences and the revealed message' (#153). For it is by 'correlating faith and life' (#207) that 'catechesis...bridges the gap between belief and life, between the Christian message and the cultural context' (#205). Religious educators must not only teach a faith tradition but also engage people's lives in the world because 'experience is a necessary medium for exploring and assimilating the truths which constitute the objective content of Revelation' (#152). Thus, effective catechesis presents every aspect of the faith tradition 'to refer clearly to the fundamental experiences of people's lives' (#133). To encourage lived faith, religious educators must make participants of own lives in the world integral to the curriculum; 'one must start with praxis to be able to arrive at praxis' (#245).

For this essay, I will take the title as assigned and review the foundational convictions that undergird the approach, describe the pedagogical movements that constitute its dynamics, and end with some general comments—its flexibility,

questions, and so on. In the actual praxis of this approach educators will give access to the spiritual wisdom of some faith tradition(s). So typically, this is a shared Christian praxis approach, or Jewish, or whatever the tradition(s) to be taught might be. From my own context I will take the instance of teaching Christian faith—Shared Christian Praxis—while emphasising that this approach can be used to learn from or to nurture faith identity within any faith tradition.

An Approach

I deliberately refer to shared praxis as *an approach* to religious education rather than a method; many methods can be used within its ambit. Yet it is very much an intentional and reflective way of doing religious education. As such, and after a person has personally appropriated its convictions and commitments, it becomes one's style or, better still, one's way of being with people as a religious educator.

As a style or way of being with people, effecting a shared praxis approach depends enormously on the convictions of its agents. In my efforts to teach this approach I spend much more time reviewing the nature and purpose of religious education that it reflects than describing its movements. By way of what we aspire to effect in the lives of people and faith communities this approach requires the conviction that religious education should be emancipatory for its participants and prompt them to act with responsibility for the life of the world. Its dynamics should be a fitting instrument of God's grace to encourage them to live their faith toward fullness of life for themselves and others, to promote peace and justice in society, to realise God's reign 'on earth as in heaven.' Its epistemological intent reaches beyond religious knowledge—without leaving it behind—toward spiritual wisdom and holiness of life. So, for educators who simply intend people to 'learn about' religious traditions without affecting how they live their lives in the world, a shared praxis approach would be ineffective to their purposes.

Likewise, someone committed to 'teaching as telling'—by the teacher—would not find this approach congenial. It offers a pedagogy that is communal, conversational, and participatory, whose dynamics engage people's innate vitality to know for themselves, to be agents of their faith, to appropriate what a religious tradition might mean for their everyday lives and to make decisions in response to it. Similarly, people from an authoritarian interest would not find this a compatible approach. With its commitments to people speaking their own word, to critical reflection on their lives and faith, to personal appropriation of faith traditions and responsible decision-making, people who see their faith as requiring blind submission, or as a means of control, would find a shared praxis approach detrimental to their interests. In sum, if people do not have some such convictions about the nature and purpose of religious education, then this approach would be very inappropriate.

The key to using a shared praxis approach effectively is the teacher's own intentionality and alertness to foster its dynamics within a teaching-learning event. So people sharing how they feel or what they already know should be balanced by inviting them to critical reflection upon their own statements; likewise, accessing

spiritual wisdom from religious traditions should be accompanied by opportunity for participants to appropriate this wisdom and come to decisions about it. Though groups familiar with the approach can become very adept at honouring its dynamics, the designated educator has a distinct service to render—inviting the conversation around to all of its movements.

To Religious Education

The literature of this field, at least in the English-speaking world, distinguishes between *religious* education and *Christian* education (or named according to the sponsoring faith community) or catechesis—the preferred Catholic term. Authors identify religious education as the more academic study of religion(s), whereas Christian education or *catechesis* is the intentional process of socialising people into Christian identity. The first is more academic, the second more ecclesial; the first is more intent on information, the second more on formation.

As points of emphasis, these distinctions may be helpful, and a particular context might focus on one more than the other—compare the formal curricula of a school to the influence of a family's ethos and shared values. Beyond this, however, the distinctions can become dangerous and encourage a false dichotomy. With a vengeance, post-modern authors argue persuasively that there is no interest-free way of knowing, nor value-free imparting of knowledge of any kind. In a word, the 'objective' teaching of religion is a misleading and impossible myth to fulfil. So let us move beyond religious education that intends to have no practical effect on people's lives, and likewise catechesis that simply socialises people into a faith identity without thorough knowledge, understanding, and conviction about their tradition. Within my Catholic community of discourse I often write and speak of 'catechetical education' to signal my conviction that we need both religious education and catechesis. A shared praxis approach is effective and appropriate for both religious education, with more emphasis on scholarly study, and for catechesis, with more emphasis on faith formation.

Regarding religious education let me take the least confessional context. I'm thinking of government-sponsored school systems where 'religion' is included in the curriculum but its teachers are strictly forbidden from proselytising into a particular faith (as in England, Sweden, etc.). The standard posture taken has been that these religious educators must teach religion 'objectively.' But I echo again that all knowledge and thus education is perspectival and value laden. Even if a religious educator can approximate such 'objectivity' in his/her teaching of religion(s), it is not apt to engage the real interests of students—they are being asked to study it apart from their lives. 'Boring' is likely to be the common association with the religion curriculum.

However, between confessional proselytising and the objective study of religion there is a middle ground. Rather than lobbying people to embrace a particular religious identity on the one hand, or *teaching about* religion on the other, such public school teachers can approach the study of religious tradition(s) as lending

students access to spiritual wisdom, so that they can *learn from* them for their own lives (Grimmitt 1987). For what else are the great world religions but sources of spiritual wisdom that have withstood the test of time; everyone can *learn from* them in ways that can enhance their own spiritual journey and promote the common good as well. At a minimum, such public school curricula should promote understanding among people of different faiths and encourage appreciation (not just toleration) for religious diversity, all the more urgent in our time. The study of religion in any context should be done intentionally to have positive effects on people's lives and on their society. For religious education to be humanising—and surely it always has such intent—it must always be done so that people *learn from for their lives* more than *learn about for their heads*.

To move beyond *teaching about* to *learning from* requires a pedagogy capable of as much, and I argue that a shared praxis approach is eminently suited to this good end. For both personal engagement and great freedom are built into the very dynamics of its pedagogy—encouraging people to name and reflect upon the generative themes of their own lives, to seek out the spiritual wisdom of religious tradition(s) regarding those themes, and then to discern and decide for themselves about such wisdom. It gives people access to religious tradition(s) but actively engages them in the process—crucial for *learning from*—and honours their own liberty of choice about how to appropriate to their own lives.

Another way to state these assets is that a shared praxis approach encourages people to perform what Bernard Lonergan (1972, ch. 1) recognised as the dynamics of cognition. By this I mean that it encourages participants to personally attend to and understand the data under study, but then invites them onward to make their own judgments and decisions about it. For Lonergan, 'authentic cognition' requires the knower to consciously perform all four activities of the dynamics of cognition. He describes them as attending to the data, understanding it, making judgments about it, and coming to decision in response to it (see Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, ch. 1 for a summary). In a public school context, educators using a shared praxis approach can avoid all semblance of proselytising, and yet teach the religion curriculum in ways that enrich people's own faith journey and serve the common good as well. In sum, this approach is eminently suited to even the most scholarly study of religious tradition(s); to every effort that describes itself as religious education.

Likewise, in the context of faith communities and programs that specifically intend to nurture the faith identity of participants, as in the Sunday school of a congregation or parish, a shared praxis approach is powerfully effective. It can both inform and form people in a religion; it has a constitutive commitment to teach faithfully the creed, code, and cult of a tradition—its beliefs, ethic, and worship—but its dynamics of appropriation and decision making, in the context of people's own lives, make for a powerfully formative process as well. It can educate people's heads, hearts, and hands, to live their faith in the everyday of life. The faith community context and the formative intent of such a program will shape how questions are posed and how the faith tradition is presented; to encourage conviction and identity within it. Yet, the dynamics of the process—critical

reflection, personal appropriation and decision making—avoid indoctrination and respect the discernment and freedom of participants.

On a personal note, I can say that I have used a shared praxis approach for many years to teach theology in a university—scholarly study to *learn from* religious traditions—and likewise in a parish catechetical program designed to form people in Catholic faith. In both it has proved capable of giving people access to the spiritual wisdom of religious tradition(s) in ways that inform, form, and even transform them in their own spiritual identity.

Praxis

Since Paulo Freire resurrected ‘praxis’ in educational discourse (1970) there has been abundant debate about what precisely the term means. Indeed, much educational literature still favours the word ‘experience’ instead. However, *praxis* has a more agential connotation than *experience*. Praxis is activity in which one is always an agent, an initiator or active participant, whereas experiences connotes something that one undergoes. John Dewey (1938) struggled to transcend this limitation of the term experience throughout his writings, never with complete success.

When Freire championed a praxis way of knowing in education he was working to retrieve an ancient epistemology. Aristotle had divided—even separated—the ‘ways of knowing’ into *theoria*, *praxis* and *poiesis* (1934). They came to be understood as theoretical knowledge, practical wisdom, and the creative or imaginative knowing as reflected in poetry, art and artefacts. Over the centuries, however, and especially in the aftermath of the Enlightenment, the theoretical mode of knowing—a la pure critical reason—triumphed entirely, with praxis or common-sense knowing and imagination being dismissed as inferior or unreliable. Freire was trying to redress the impoverishment in this reigning epistemology. Though he never stated his intent as such, a close reading of his works reflects that he intended the term *praxis* to subsume all three into a more holistic way of knowing.

In my own written works, praxis refers to purposeful human activity, what we do reflectively and imaginatively, or how we reflect upon and intend what we are doing. As such it attempts to hold theory and practice in a dialectical unity, ever imagining the outcome and consequences as well. So I intend the term *praxis* to entail reflective, active and creative activities—as a unity. A praxis way of knowing is intentional *reflection* upon what one is *doing* or what is going on in order to *imagine* consequences and forge new possibilities.

The *active* dimension of a praxis way of knowing engages any and all bodily, mental and volitional activities, and likewise pays attention to whatever is ‘being done’ in people’s ‘life-world.’ It can engage what people know, how they feel, what they do or the historical reality of their social/political context. The *reflective* aspect of praxis entails the whole human capacity for knowing—engaging reason, memory, and imagination—intentionally learning from and for one’s life in the world. My designation of this as *critical* reflection does not imply a negative posture; on the contrary it is a positive act of discernment, as implied in the etymological root of the

term (from the Greek *krinein*). A praxis mode of knowing encourages a reflective and discerning approach to one's life in the world; its reflection through reason, memory, and imagination can look inward to the depths of personal awareness or outward at the whole public world through social analysis. The *creative* aspect of a praxis way of knowing—its *poiesis*—is prompted by intentionally turning to imagination in order to recognise the likely consequences of present praxis, and beyond this to imagine what might be or should be, and to act to bring about the desired end. This creative aspect of praxis permeates the active and reflective activities and mediates between them—always the role of imagination—with an impetus for ongoing and responsible praxis in the world.

Concerning developmental readiness for critical reflection, clearly the fullness of it is not achieved until well into adulthood. Indeed, research by Developmentalists (Parks, 1986) indicates that a high percentage of the population fall short of real critical reflection on their personal and social praxis. Nevertheless, 'the tree is in the seed.' In other words, and as Piaget (1970) would advise, good education encourages reflection in the very early years—albeit on concrete matters—so that such personal and communal discernment becomes more likely at an adult level. I would argue that the journey into maturity of faith requires such critical discernment along the way.

Let me make a brief parenthetical comment here on the theological rationale for turning to present praxis—to life in the world—as an integral aspect of the curriculum of religious education. At least in a Christian context such a move implies a theology of revelation. The shared praxis approach reflects the conviction that God is ever revealing Godself in the everyday of life, and mediating God's presence and grace through the same ordinary media. To invite people to reflect critically on their lives in the world is not simply a pedagogical ploy to get their attention before accessing 'the real stuff', the formal revelation of scripture and tradition. Instead, getting people to pay attention to their present praxis is to recognise that God is present, revealing and mediating God's grace in the ordinary and everyday of their lives.

Christian Story and Vision

In the context of Christian religious education a shared praxis approach gives participants access to the story and vision of Christian faith. I reiterate that in a Jewish context it would access the Jewish story and vision, or in studying other world religions it could give access to a variety of different traditions. Here, however, let me take the specific instance of religious education that intends to educate in Christian faith.

As God is present and God's grace is mediated through our present praxis and 'life world,' this has been true for thousands of years in the Christian and Hebrew traditions, beginning with the call of Abraham and Sarah. The formal revelation that has arisen from God's self-disclosure throughout history—for Christian faith highpointed in Jesus, the Christ—is now mediated to the present through scripture

and tradition. People in the present deserve to inherit the legacy of spiritual wisdom and practice that remains from this historical presence and revelation of God over time.

I use story and vision as metaphors to symbolise this whole historical reality of Christian revelation and the demands/promises that this faith makes upon the lives of its adherents and communities. So, Christian story is realised and expressed in a myriad of different forms: scriptures, traditions and liturgies; creeds, dogmas, doctrines and theologies; sacraments and rituals, symbols, myths, gestures and religious language; spiritualities, values, laws and expected lifestyles; songs and music, dance and drama; art, artefacts and architectures; memories of holy people, celebrations of holy times and appreciation of holy places; community structures and forms of governance; and more.

I do not pose Christian story as a meta-narrative that is the only way to explain everything to everyone all the time and everywhere. We are not the only people among whom God has been revealing Godself with saving intent; to claim that we are would deny the universality of God's love for all people, a dogma of Christian faith. Yet the Christian story is a powerful, particular narrative that is deeply life-giving, reflecting the spiritual wisdom of thousands of years and enabling people to live humanly and religiously with great integrity, truth and beauty. The religious educator's responsibility is to see to it that people of the Christian community have ready access to the 'whole story' of their rich faith tradition, and in ways that are absolutely faithful to its constitutive truths, practices, and values.

The vision prompted by the Christian story is ultimately the reign of God, the realisation of God's intentions of peace and justice, love and freedom, wholeness and fullness of life for all humankind, here and hereafter. Practically, the vision reflects the implications that the Christian story has for the lives of its adherents. It is the meaning in front of the story; its gifts and demands, its hopes and promises for lives and societies today. The vision is what guides people in living their faith in their present time and place. This vision of Christian faith will and should shape the whole curriculum of Christian Religious Education; why, what, and how it is taught. And every aspect of the Christian story has a vision to it; as God loves us, we must love each other; as God forgives us, we must forgive those who trespass against us, and so on and on.

Shared

The word *shared* in the title of this approach refers both to the communal dynamics that it encourages within a teaching-learning event and, likewise, to the conversation and integration between the present praxis of participants (their own stories and visions) and the Christian story and vision. Let me say a word about each aspect.

A *shared* praxis approach entails creating a community of conversation among participants, encouraging them to actively engage in the teaching-learning dynamic. It calls them into conversation and partnership with each other, to learn together. Indeed, in a faith-confessing context, it may well bring participants to conversation

with God as well, in prayer. The exchanges among participants should entail all the give and take, listening and sharing, agreement and disagreement, cherishing one's own truth while being open to the truth of others that is the mark of good conversation. Plato and the ancient philosophers called this dialectics, being able to share with and learn from other people through conversation. Plato originally used dialectics to capture the dynamics of good conversation, or what he would call dialogue. Hegel retrieved Plato's notion of dialectics but with more emphasis on the tension, the 'give and take' within conversation. Marx misinterpreted Hegel's retrieval of dialectics, giving the impression that a dialectical encounter is inevitably conflictual; this is far from true. In the context of a conversation, as Plato would favour, the more it reflects a collaborative and partnering process the more fruitful it will be.

The second connotation of *shared* in the title of this approach reflects its intent to promote the integration of life and faith into a lived faith by participants. Parenthetically, note that I favour 'integration' rather than 'correlation' between life and faith; I find the latter too weak a term for what I intend here. I have written more technically about the integration of life and faith as calling for a dialectical hermeneutics between people's own praxis—their reflections upon their lives in the world—and the Christian story and vision. Existentially for participants in a teaching/learning event, dialectical hermeneutics amounts to people appropriating the spiritual wisdom of a faith tradition as their own or coming to see for themselves what it means for their lives.

More technically, as the story/vision encounters present praxis, there are aspects that Christian faith may affirm, aspects that it may question or call in judgment, and it will ever call people to more faithful Christian living. Likewise, as participants bring their present praxis to appropriate Christian faith, there are aspects of the Christian story/vision that they will affirm and embrace, aspects of the proposed understanding and present living of this faith that they may question, and they will ever imagine how to live Christian faith more faithfully.

Before moving on to describe its movements, let me summarise the constitutive components of a shared Christian praxis approach to religious education. It entails creating a community of conversation and active participation in which people critically reflect together on their own historical agency in time and place and on their socio-cultural realities, have access together to the spiritual wisdom of Christian story and vision, and are encouraged to personally appropriate this wisdom with the creative intent of renewed praxis in Christian faith toward God's reign.

Pedagogical Movements of a Shared Christian Praxis Approach

The dynamics of 'bringing life to faith and faith to life' suggest a pattern of pedagogical moves. I reiterate, however, that this is only a suggestive framework for the dynamic that the educator or group might encourage; it is certainly not a lock-step process. I intend something much more symphonic than sequential. This

being said, the dynamic of ‘life to faith to life’ suggests a pattern to intentionally fulfil the undergirding commitments of this approach. I’ve outlined its dynamics as a focusing activity and five subsequent movements. Let me explain each briefly, imagining them being done in *Christian* religious education. To relieve the density of each summary I deliberately chose to give an example throughout from a lesson with nine year olds on ‘Jesus is our Friend.’

The Focusing Activity

Here the educator’s intent is twofold: a) to engage people as active participants in the teaching-learning event, and b) to focus a curriculum topic as something of real interest to the lives of participants. Thus, it should dispose people to actively participate by turning them to look at their own lives in the world, and begin to engage them with what Freire called a generative theme (1970) for those lives—something of real import to their present praxis of life or faith or both. For example, the lesson with nine year olds and Jesus as Friend could begin with a story of children becoming friends and ask them if they had similar experiences; the key is to establish the theme of ‘friendship’ and to turn them toward their own praxis of it.

Movement One: Expressing the Theme as in Present Praxis

The intent of Movement One (M1) is to encourage participants to express themselves around the generative theme as they encounter it in their present praxis. They can express what they do themselves or what they see others doing, their own feelings or thoughts or what they already know about it, or their perception of what is going on around them in their socio-cultural context. The key is that people ‘pay attention’ to the theme as they encounter it in present praxis, and name their own experience of the theme; how they see it and engage with it. Their expressions can be spoken, written, drawn, constructed or mediated to each other by any means of human communication. For example, the teacher could have children draw themselves with a best friend and then to talk about their drawing, or could have them explain what it feels like to have a friend, to be a friend, with whom they are best friends, etc.

Movement Two: Reflecting on the Theme of Life/Faith

The intent of Movement Two (M2) is to encourage people to reflect critically on the theme in their lives and upon their own expressions about it. As noted, critical reflection can engage reason, memory, or imagination or a combination of them; such reflection can be both personal and social. Reason questions would ask people why things are the way they are, what causes them to be this way, what they think their meaning might be, why they think their own expressions are as they are,

and so on. Any question or questioning activity that encourages people to reason and probe more deeply into their present praxis around the theme of the lesson is appropriate here. For example, the teacher could ask children why we need friends, how we know when someone is a good friend, some things in us or society that make it easy or difficult to be friends, etc.

Memory questions or questioning activities might ask participants about the origins of present praxis, their own recall or past experiences regarding it, to uncover how the social history is shaping present praxis, and to recognise how their own biography or social location is shaping how they respond to the theme. The general intent is to get people to re-member around the theme as they experience it in present praxis, i.e., to recognise how their historical memberships shape this theme in their lives and their interpretation of it. For example, the teacher could ask children to remember how they became friends with some best friend, to recall a good experience of friendship or one in which they were disappointed, and what made the difference, to discuss some of the traditions of their families or culture around friendship, etc.

Imagination type questions or activities invite people to recognise the likely consequences of this theme in present praxis, to imagine what could be or should be, and how to work toward a desired outcome. Imagination encourages participants to recognise their best hopes around this particular theme, and what their faith life invites of them in this regard. The key pedagogical task here is to have people imagine beyond present praxis for its likely consequences, its possibilities and its desired outcomes. For example, the teacher could ask children what would life be like without friends, or how can you be a better friend, or, moving toward faith language, ‘do you ever imagine Jesus as your friend?’ With young children I often use an imagination question or activity to effect transition between movements two and three.

Movement Three (M3): Christian Story and Vision Around the Theme

Here the pedagogical task is to give people ready access to the Christian story and vision around the particular theme under focus. The educator should be conscious here that what is being sought from the Christian story is its spiritual wisdom for life. In other words, this is not a purely doctrinal review—though it will often include as much—but rather a presentation of the tradition’s spiritual wisdom around this particular life/faith theme. Likewise, it helps to intentionally raise up the vision out of the particular story, what Christian faith teaches and means for lives now around the theme and how best to respond. So with the story of the Exodus (Exodus 1–25) it is also important to make explicit the God of freedom revealed here, the justice that God intends for all who are oppressed, and the responsibilities that a people of God have for promoting such justice and freedom. For example, the teacher could share with children the story of Jesus welcoming the little children, embracing and blessing them, and explaining to adults that they must become as children in order to belong to

the reign of God (Mark 10:13–16). Some ways that children can live as friends of Jesus, and what concretely this might mean for their lives, could also be reviewed.

Movement Four: Appropriating the Wisdom of Christian Faith to Life

While the focusing activity with Movements One and Two attend to peoples' lives in the world, and Movement Three gives access to the wisdom of Christian faith, or whatever religious tradition is being taught, so Movement Four (M4) begins the dynamic of bringing faith back to life again, with renewed faith and new possibilities for life as well. This is the explicit moment that attempts to integrate faith and life in order to encourage decision for lived faith in Movement Five.

The intent of Movement Four is that people come to see for themselves what the wisdom of Christian faith might mean for their everyday lives, to personally appropriate this wisdom and to 'take it to heart' according to their own discernment. To this end, the questions or activities that the educator would prompt are ones that encourage people into such recognition and appropriation, inviting them to make it their own in the every day of life. So the educator might inquire how participants are feeling now about the theme, or what they are coming to recognise for themselves, what is occurring to them, what they agree with or disagree with or might add to what has been presented in Movement Three. For example, the teacher could ask the children to draw themselves with their friend Jesus, or to act out the Gospel story they've heard. The teacher could ask, 'Do you really think of Jesus as your friend? How does that make you feel? What kind of a friend will Jesus be? What does that tell you about Jesus?'

Movement Five (M5): Making Decisions Regarding Christian Faith

Here the intent is to give people an opportunity to choose and decide how they might live in response to the wisdom they have encountered in Christian faith, or in whatever tradition is being taught. Decisions here can be cognitive, affective, or behavioural; often experienced as what people believe, how they might worship or relate with God in prayer, or the ethics and values by which they choose to live their lives. The imperative is that all decisions be 'real' for participants' own lives, influencing how they live and who they become. The pedagogue might pose questions or questioning activities, like what positions they now take about this theme, how they are called to live it in everyday life, what is the best wisdom they want to embrace and the next step toward realising it, what are the practical commitments it invites from their lives or the concrete implications if they take it seriously, and so on. In the theme of Jesus as Friend the teacher could invite children to choose one way they will show they are friends of Jesus, something to let others know that they are Jesus' friend, write their own prayer expressing their friendship with Jesus, or plan a project to do together in order to grow as friends of Jesus.

Other Features of Note

Flexibility

While the sequence I've outlined is suggested by a 'life to faith to life' dynamic, it need not be affected by this progression. Rather, the movements have great flexibility and many possible combinations. I have often combined the focusing activity with M1, and M1 with M2; I've borrowed from M3—briefly—as a focusing activity to engage people's interests; I've often shared from M3 as the conversation of M1 and M2 unfold; I've done an M3 and then some M4 to return to M3 again before going back to M4 and eventually on to M5; I've combined M4 and M5 only to return again to M3 for more access to the wisdom of the faith tradition. Many times the decisions made in M5 have constituted the focusing activity for the next gathering of an ongoing community of conversation.

The approach is also flexible in its timeframes and locations. I've found myself honouring the commitments of all five movements within a five-minute conversation but also spreading them over a month in an undergraduate theology course. Likewise, I have used it in formal teaching settings from Kindergarten to Doctoral Seminars, in adult Bible Study and Youth Ministry events, in retreat week-ends and faith sharing groups, and in aeroplane conversations with strangers along the way. Even when making a public presentation at a conference or congress, I attempt to honour at least some of its commitments, creating a conversation with and among participants.

The Commitments are what Matter

I made this point in passing earlier but return to it here because of its importance. Beneath the whole process and each movement there are foundational pedagogical commitments. The overarching commitment is to create a community of participation and conversation to enable participants to integrate life and faith. Then the focusing activity reflects a commitment to actively engage participants in the teaching-learning dynamic and to attend to something generative for their lives. Movement One reflects a commitment to get people to 'pay attention' to their own lives in the world and to express their present praxis. Movement Two reflects commitment to critical reflection, encouraging people to think for themselves, personally and socially, to question and probe, to reason, remember and imagine around the theme as reflected in their present praxis. Movement Three reflects the commitment to give people ready access to the spiritual wisdom of a faith tradition, enabling them to encounter its story and vision for their lives. Movement Four reflects commitment to appropriation, to encouraging participants to integrate their lives and their faith, to make their own what this spiritual wisdom might bring to their ordinary situations. And Movement Five reflects commitment to invite people to decisions—cognitive, affective or behavioural—choosing a lived response to the wisdom they have encountered.

These commitments to participation and conversation, to engagement and attention, to expression, to reflection, to accessing, to appropriation, to decision-making, should run all through the process. In other words, engagement does not end with the focusing activity but must be maintained throughout; likewise reflection is not limited to M2, nor expression to M1, nor decision-making to M5, and so on. Rather, the educator needs to promote these activities throughout the whole event, and with emphasis in whatever sequence seems most appropriate.

A Mode of Practical Theology and Theological Reflection

Many authors have recognised the potential of a shared praxis approach as a method for doing practical theology. It is one instance of how to facilitate moving from praxis to theory to renewed praxis, what is now recognised as the standard 'method' of practical theology. Likewise, it is a suitable approach to train people in theological reflection, as in the practicum conversations of ministerial field education. In effect, it encourages people to 'do' theology in the everyday of their lives. It is a way to clarify and reflect upon the generative themes of life, to bring them to the spiritual wisdom of religious tradition(s), to return to renewed and more faith-filled praxis in the everyday.

The Role of Questions

Over the years, it has become clear to me that the shared praxis approach rises or falls on the questions posed throughout. Here, again, the intent of each movement can prompt the educator, or participants themselves, to imagine the kinds of questions or questioning activities to pose at any given moment. So the focusing activity suggests questions that turn people to look at and pay attention to their own lives in the world; Movement One questions are the kind that encourage people to express themselves around the theme as they encounter it in their present praxis; Movement Two questions will invite people to go deeper into their present praxis, to analyse it, personally or socially, to reason, remember, or imagine about it (though one would not typically attend to all three on any one occasion). Movement Four suggests questions that invite people to see for themselves and to recognise what they are coming to know; Movement Five calls for questions that invite people to decision.

Postscript

Over the past thirty years, I have struggled to do and articulate a shared praxis approach to religious education. My hope now is that others will build upon this approach, retaining whatever 'gains' it may represent for life-giving religious education, and then going far beyond where I left it. We must never forget that our efforts to promote lived faith and spiritual wisdom in people's lives succeed only by the grace of God. While we remember that it is God who gives the 'growth' (1 Corinthians 3:6), we yet must not forget that God's grace 'works' through nature, through our own good efforts. I ask no more of a shared praxis approach than

that it enable religious educators to make good efforts. If it does, then I make bold to hope that this approach will become an abiding legacy for generations of religious educators yet to come, that its fruits will remain. If that prove true, then, according to the Gamaliel principle (Acts 5:33–39), my own good efforts have been an instrument of God's grace, and to God be the glory.

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LEADERSHIP IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: A CRITIQUE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Leonie Crotty

Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese, Sydney, Australia

Introduction

This chapter addresses leadership in religious education particularly from the perspective of the impact of the Religious Education Coordinator (REC). Research undertaken has shown it is a valued and significant position for the Catholic life of the school. As well, the research identified areas of ambiguity in regard to the REC that are problematic for the exercise of religious leadership. The introduction of the REC position into Catholic schools in Australia has enabled the mission of the Catholic school to be more explicit and focused. Research has found that as the school continually reinterprets what it means to be a Catholic school in changing social and ecclesial contexts, there are also implications for the REC position that need to be addressed.

The relevance of this research for Catholic education is located not only in the findings that have been generated but also in the methodology itself. The methodology was able to accommodate the complex and interconnected nature of religious leadership in the Catholic school and engaged a process that sought to provide opportunity for individuals to share their experience. The study has the potential to further inform those entrusted with leadership and educational policies in Catholic schools to be more attuned to the complex set of demands faced by principals, RECs and others regarding religious leadership.

Catholic Education in Australia

In 2005 in Australia, 20% of the nation's school age children are educated in Catholic schools (National Catholic Education Commission, 2005). Three distinctive features of Australian Catholic schools are that they are established by the Catholic Church, administered separately from the government schools and receive from the government less than full funding. These elements are tied historically to the Church's response to the circumstances of Catholics in the early days of white settlement (National Catholic Education Commission, 1972).

To facilitate the administration of Catholic schools each diocese has a leadership office. As well, and in addition to a National Catholic Education Commission (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1985) established in 1969, each of the six states and two territories has a Catholic Education Commission (CEC) that serves its dioceses by facilitating collaboration with federal and state governments, Church agencies, and educational and industrial groups. Canavan (1986) identified that these Commissions were set up primarily to deal with increasing interaction and intervention, especially from governments, in regard to distribution of funds to individual schools.

Leadership in religious education today is informed from an historical overview of Australian Catholic education that can be described across three distinct phases (Fogarty, 1959; O'Farrell, 1992; Luttrell, 1996). Following white settlement in 1788 the first phase, from about 1800–1870, includes the time when small Catholic schools were set up in order to 'preserve the Catholic faith' in a predominantly Protestant environment. Luttrell notes that the number of these schools was few and many struggled to be good places of learning. Through this phase the government provided some funding for all religious schools (O'Farrell).

The second phase, from around 1870–1970, began with controversies about government support of Church schools. By the end of the 1870s government funding for Church schools had ceased so the Australian Catholic bishops increased their appeals overseas for more members of religious congregations to teach in the Catholic schools. Significantly, this second phase coincided initially with the first Vatican Ecumenical Council, Vatican I (1868–1870) and finally with the second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Vatican II (1962–65). It was the period that consolidated the Church's ministry in Catholic school education in Australia.

The third phase began during the 1960s and was described by McLaughlin (2000) as encompassing a renewed view of Catholic schooling, of human culture and of the Catholic Church in relation to other religions and faiths, freedom, and anthropology. Significantly too, at the start of this phase the federal government began the 'reintroduction' of some financial assistance for schools. At this time members of religious congregations had insufficient numbers to staff the schools, as many of their members began a variety of additional ministries. It was in this context that once again 'the people' emerged as the main teachers just as they had done in the original Australian Catholic schools (D'Orsa, 1999(a); Luttrell, 1996; D'Arbon, Duignan, Duncan, Dwyer & Goodwin, 2001).

Catholic Schools and Religious Education

O'Farrell (1992) recalls that Australian Catholic schools were progressively developed on the understanding expressed in 1862 by Archbishop John Bede Polding to the government of the time, when he described Catholic education as something not delivered in parcels, but an enterprise that is a collective result that emanates from the content, the teacher and the way the school operated. Paradoxically this foundational understanding of Catholic education in Australia has occurred in a nation that is frequently described as secular and highly pluralistic where it is asserted that 'religion has never been vital or irrelevant ...' (Breward, 1988, p. 91; Hogan, 1987).

While operating worldwide with particular cultural variations, Catholic schools exist to ensure that the education of young people includes the sacred and the religious as well as the general and the secular. Its purpose is also to serve the development of persons of faith who express their faith in action (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, n. 56). Literature indicates that most research worldwide on Catholic school leadership has focused predominantly on the position of the principal. This chapter extends the concept of leadership to the new REC position while including the leadership of the principal.

The Religious Education Coordinator

Religious leadership in the Catholic school is explored through the REC position introduced into Catholic schools in the late 1960s. It is a valued position that contributes to what is distinctive about Catholic school education. This chapter draws on a study of religious leadership, regarding the REC position, undertaken by Crotty (2002) in the system of schools administered by the Catholic Education Office (CEO) for the Archdiocese of Sydney. It also addresses critiques identified about the position, including its tendency to gather to itself and deflect from other positions, and indeed all teachers, the responsibility that belongs to everyone in Catholic education, namely to witness to and promote the mission of the Catholic school in making Jesus Christ known and loved. Though particular to one diocese, the implications of the research for other dioceses are evident.

The introduction of the REC into Sydney schools, and most other dioceses in Australia, corresponds with the development of diocesan systems of Catholic schools. These systems are a most notable dimension of Catholic educational bureaucracy.

Before the centralisation process began in 1965 the purposes and goal achievement of Catholic schools in Sydney were unambiguous. Principals were relatively autonomous and with their teachers they provided students with an integrated religious-secular formation The goals and programs

of each school were determined by the principal and the local community, and there was little involvement or accountability beyond the parish and the religious community (Canavan, 1986, pp. 20–23; 271).

The principal, the identified leader of the school is responsible for the overall educational achievement and wellbeing of the enrolled students, and accountable to parents and diocesan authorities for the achievements of the students. The REC is delegated by the principal with particular responsibility for the coordination of the classroom religious education (RE) programs, and generally, other designated religious activities and events particular to the Catholic school within the mission of the Catholic Church.

The REC, designated by a different title in some dioceses and independent Catholic schools under the auspices of religious congregations, is usually part of the leadership structure of Catholic schools. In Sydney the position is supported by personnel and services from the regional and central offices of the Sydney Catholic Education Office.

The RE program, the focus of the REC position, is developed at the diocesan level. One distinctiveness of the REC position is reflected by it being the only position in the school with a specifically 'religious' title. It is also the only position described with comprehensive responsibility for Catholic activities, namely the classroom RE program and other religious activities and celebrations. Conversely, for the principal, other leaders and all teachers the 'religious' component of their educational work is identified 'within' their position description as part of their overall responsibilities.

Context for Establishment of the REC

The demands of the 1960s included the universal renewal of the Catholic Church promulgated by the Vatican II Council, 1962–1965. As well, the independence of the Religious Congregations in staffing their own schools, while highly meritorious for Catholic education, was becoming increasingly problematic given the 'culture that developed [was] one of separatism at the grassroots level, with little fraternisation among members of different religious congregations' (D'Orsa, 1999, p. 60). This time in Catholic schools also presented new and particular problems for the growing number of 'lay' teachers and for Catholic Education Offices planning to accommodate increasing student enrolments, pay teachers adequate salaries and provide sufficient classrooms.

In Australia today education is primarily a state government responsibility, with supplementary funding being provided by the federal government. In the 1960s, without financial support from the government, Catholic schools faced a particular crisis in implementing the Wyndham Scheme, 1961–1965 (Hogan, 1978; Canavan, 1988; Luttrell, 1996). With the transition to the new Higher School Certificate in 1967 the additional year of secondary school necessitated in the Sydney archdiocese some 300 extra teachers. Clearly the demands on a struggling group of schools were

daunting (D'Orsa, 1999). In this context the leaders of the CEO in Sydney supported the introduction of the new REC position. Amid diverse struggles they introduced a position that was intended to offer enhancement to the Catholic education and life of the schools.

Developments in the REC Position

Since the establishment of the REC position in the late 1960s, the CEO has published various statements outlining its purpose, functions and structural supports (1970; 1979; 1983; 1986(a), (b); 1989 and 1996). The following extracts capture some of the main developments.

1970: Religion Coordinator

The document identified the necessary personal qualities of the religion coordinator, indicating that 'many religious in the Archdiocese could qualify for the position.' The functions were: educating the other catechists and coordinating religious knowledge and catechetical programs; liaising with priests and parents; arranging guest speakers; building up the library; sex education in the school; counselling and prayer programs.

1979: Religious Education Coordinator: Interim Document

The dimensions of this REC position were framed around the concepts of ideology and values, vision and goals, community, partnership and responsibility. It identified the REC as leader and guide, with particular personal qualities at the service of the principal, teachers, clergy and parents. The REC was required to make explicit the RE program, the liturgical celebrations, and to assist in developing an REC handbook.

1983: A Religious Education Coordinator, A Handbook

This outlined the responsibility of the REC in terms of leadership, witness, guidance and service. As well as RE in the Catholic school, the REC was to collaborate with catechists in the state schools, and to contribute to the work of ecumenism and building relationships with other religions and faiths.

1985: The Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board

The Board approved provision of time release and a financial allowance for all RECs. The financial allowance was subject to attainment of graduate studies deemed necessary for a substantial appointment. The 1985 policy was re-issued in 1988 by the new Executive Director.

1996: Religious Education Coordinator: Conditions of Appointment & Employment

The main functions of the REC position are:

- giving leadership in religious education and the liturgical and faith life of the school;
- coordinating classroom programs in religious education so as to ensure quality teaching and learning;
- nurturing positive human relations in the school community; and
- administering the organisational, resource and record keeping aspects of the religious education program.

2004: The Catholic Schools Leadership Program

This program (Catholic Education Office, 1998) and its structural framework, supporting the induction and development of personnel in all leadership positions, became the basis of the REC position description. Its six dimensions are Religious Leadership, Leadership for Learning, Human Resources Leadership, Strategic Leadership, Organisational Leadership, and Personal Dimensions of Leadership.

Researching the REC position

Why research religious leadership through the lens of the REC? There has consistently been affirmation for the REC position as well as concerns that constituted the collective impetus for this research. The affirmations include recognition for the quality of the RE programs, the skills that RECs bring to liturgical celebrations and the way they profile religion in the life of the school. Some concerns include difficulty in attracting suitable applicants as well as lack of parity of the REC's coordinating functions in relation to other coordinating positions. RECs express concern about accessing other leadership positions. The REC is frequently the 'public' face of the Church in the school community and frequently the position is seen as too complex. Often RECs bear the burden of staff's inability or unwillingness to teach RE. In some schools the REC is an optional member of the school executive.

Church documentation presents the conceptual notion of leadership while writing in terms of the ideals, values and goals required to effect the stated and lofty aims of *The Catholic School* (1977, no. 83–88). The Roman Catholic Church perspective in education increasingly has needed to include an understanding of the different Catholic Churches, such as the Maronite Catholics, as well as needing to engage in ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, interaction with new religious movements and alternative expressions of spirituality. The REC is now required to give leadership in a Catholic context when religion continues to be significant in the landscape, though its forms and features are changing (Bouma, 1999).

Literature and the REC position

Literature that informed this research included: the Catholic Church and religious education; educational leadership; educational organisation; and Sydney CEO documentation about the REC position. Its analysis generated a focus on 'religious leadership' derived from multiple interconnections including the Roman Catholic documents from the Council of Vatican II, especially *Declaration on Christian Education* (1965), Paul VI in *Evangelisation in the Modern World* (1975) and subsequent catechetical statements and those of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Literature on educational leadership informed the study, integrating 'transactional and transformative leadership' as a humane and religiously intentional activity (Sergiovanni & Carver, 1980; 1987; 1992; 2000; Starrat, 1993; 1996; Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993; Gronn, 1999). Educational organisation literature oriented the functions performed by the REC to persons in schools, in the Church and the CEO offices. As well, the functions of the REC continue to contribute to development in communities that bring to reality the mission of Catholic education as a humane and political activity (Sergiovanni & Carver, 1980; 2000; Greenfield, 1993; Hatch, 1997).

The literature of Catholic education identified challenges for 'religious leadership' in the context of emerging spiritual consciousness and formation (Kelly, 1990; 2002; D'Orsa & D'Orsa, 1997; Duignan, 1998; 2002). It identified the problem of ensuring continuing availability of leaders for Catholic schools (d'Arbon, Duignan, Duncan, Dwyer & Goodwin, 2001). The literature of the Christian Research Association (CRA) explored the current culture and symbiosis of Catholic life as now existing within multi-faith, varied religious and new spiritual movements of the emerging Australian landscape. The literature indicated that further exploration is required of 'religious leadership' and its implications for Catholic schools.

The literature reviewed for this study focussed on the ministry of Catholic schooling in the mission of the Catholic Church. It addressed religious leadership in relation to Catholic school leadership and the REC position from the perspective of educational leadership. Educational organisation literature addressed structural supports for leadership development in Catholic schools. The Sydney CEO documentation identified the historical developments significant to the Sydney REC position.

Language of Religious Leadership

What is '*religious leadership*'? In Catholic schools, as for all the Church's teaching activities, religious language ranges over three distinct yet connected activities: evangelisation, catechesis and religious instruction (Malone & Ryan, 1994; General Directory for Catechesis, 1997; Holohan, 1999; Hally, 1999; McLaughlin, 2000). Religion in the Catholic school is intentional and potentially influential in three important areas: the nurture and support of the individual's faith development, in religious education making accessible the traditions of the Catholic story

(Boys, 1989) and in teaching values to enable faith in the public domain so that society understands there are 'preconditions for liberty' (Brennan, 2001, p. 14).

There are, however, different critiques of the Catholic schools' potential for catechesis and its application of religious language in educational contexts (Rummery, 1975; 1981; 2001; Thornhill, 1982; Crawford & Rossiter, 1985; Malone, 1992; Ryan, 1997).

Catholic School documents from the Roman Congregation are generally accessible regarding the commitment required for participating in the Christian mission of teaching in the Church and responding to 'God's gift and making the mission of the Church our task' (Komonchak, 1987). The language of these Roman documents is sociological and educational as well as catechetical and faith-formational, identifying the Catholic school in society for the good of the young and the good of society (Ryan, 1997). Significantly, though, Catholic education that addresses the religious questions of life in a genuinely educational way is ensuring the benefits of the presence of a Christian vision of humanity that is respectful of the religious freedom of all (Hally, 1999; Treston, 2001).

Leadership in religious education and the Catholic life of the school includes the classroom religious education curriculum and the liturgical and prayer life, the specific integration of Catholic values into the general curriculum, retreats and reflection days and outreach programs that are at the service of the poor and disadvantaged. Overall the confessional nature of Catholic religious education includes teaching for faith and belief, together with a commitment to faith-in-action that is expressed in favour of the humanisation of the world and its peoples. Impacted by the recent waves of migration there is a new demand on most of the Catholic schools for inter-religious and interfaith relationships with those other than Catholics so that 'the other religions are more than tolerated: indeed can they be celebrated!' (Trotter, 1999) The place of religion in Australia is 'less certain than in previous centuries and yet pluralism [also] enables a more welcome climate for religious discourse' (Howe, 2001, p. x). Religious leadership manifests itself by expression of faith in the public domain so that the liberalism of today's society intersects with the ideals of the common good and individual choice (ibid. p. 67).

Researching Leadership in Religious Education

Participants in the research included primary and secondary school principals, RECs and the religious education leaders in the CEO at the time the REC was introduced. Grounded theory methodology provided for a 'meeting of persons' through the interview process, in a conversation between persons who were known to one another in the enterprise of Catholic education (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999; Hyncer, 1999). It was chosen because much educational research has tended to depersonalise and objectify the most personal of social events, the act and art of education (Janesick, 1998).

The findings emerged from data that was systematically gathered and analysed, a distinctive feature of which is 'a general method of [constant] comparative

analysis' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. vii). The findings are conceptually dense because the data 'consists of plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts' (Strauss & Corbin, 1999, p. 80). The participants brought to the study comprehensive knowledge in four areas of human experience: knowledge of the organisation's purposes, knowledge about strategies of the organisation, knowledge of self, and knowledge of outside influences with consequences for the organisation (Reason, 1998).

Trustworthiness of the research is based on judgments about the validity and reliability of the data, the adequacy of the research process and the empirical grounding of the findings. These criteria pertain both to the researcher and those reading the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 252; Lincoln & Guba, 1999). Denzin's four components of research trustworthiness are offered for discernment regarding the research findings. Its *credibility* relates to the accuracy for the participants of the generated account of their interview that was collected in the natural setting of their own work environment. Its *transferability* applies to whether the findings generated would appear in other contexts about the REC apart from this study. Its *dependability* is tested by the capacity of the reader to determine from the written account the point at which the various stages of analysis have occurred. Its *confirmability* is the criterion by which the findings can be accepted by the readers.

The participants provided engaging and comprehensive data and it is apparent that they expect religious leadership in Catholic schools to receive further consideration as it addresses new and emerging issues.

Research Findings

The research affirmed the REC as an established and valued position in Sydney Catholic schools. However there are factors about the REC position and its place in the Church's mission of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education that are in need of review. The study identified areas of impact and ambiguity about the REC position in the following five areas.

1. nature and purpose of the REC position
2. understanding of Religious Education
3. mission of Catholic education in the Catholic Church
4. leadership of the principal and the REC, and
5. organisational structures and supports for the REC position.

1. Nature and Purpose of the REC Position

Comprehensively the study undertaken in the Sydney archdiocese found that REC position is valued. Principals, RECs and those who established the position recognise its significance and contend that it continues to be needed.

However, the study found that the REC position is possibly now too demanding and complex for one person, and there is lack of clarity about the priority that should be given to the RE curriculum and the 'faith-in-action' aspects of the Catholic

school, and there are diverse understandings and practices about how the position is exercised, especially in primary schools.

Additionally, the study identified anomaly about the title 'coordinator' regarding its extra functions when compared with other subject coordinators, and ambiguity for RECs exercising inter-collegial leadership on the executive while in some cases being left as 'the' religious leader of the Catholic school community. It identified an isolation for the REC as having the only distinctively 'religious' title in the Catholic school, as well as noting the inconsistency given to graduate studies in RE/theology being required for the REC position and not the assistant principal and principal.

Impact of the REC

Research showed that impact of the REC is evidenced in the functions and activities undertaken by the REC as well as the personal manner and style in which the position is exercised. A *positive impact* is resultant when the REC is able to lead effectively and delegate to others some of the faith-in-life aspects of the Catholic school as well as having the confidence to deflect stereotypical reactions associated with religious leadership. Effectiveness as REC is perceived when the person is trustworthy, confidential and humane, and displays integrity and upholds the values espoused in the position. Positive impact depends on credibility as a classroom teacher, competence as a curriculum coordinator and ability in across-the-school responsibilities by not being only a one-dimensional religious leader. Effective RECs possess a well-informed RE/theological background and are known to be well supported, especially in their first appointment, by a confident principal.

A negative impact results when the REC is unable to balance the RE curriculum with the faith-in-life aspects and portrays the position as burdensome to the extent that teachers are deterred from applying for advertised positions. There is diminished impact when the REC tries to be the 'conscience of the school', operates alone and does not engage others in the religious discourse and activity that belong to all in the school. Likewise there is negative impact when the REC sets up as religious leader against the leadership of the principal.

Changes to the Position

The study found that, though existing only since the late 1960s, the REC position has continually needed to change to respond to the changing nature of education, the Catholic Church, the parish and the multi-faith reality of the Catholic school. It found also that the REC position seems to have become increasingly more significant for the life of the Catholic school.

However, the study found that the varied and continuous changes to the REC position mean that it is often exercised as an amalgam of all previous position descriptions. A need to reinterpret the position came with the introduction, in the 1990s, of archdiocesan RE curricula, distinct from school-based RE programs and

the NSW government course *Studies of Religion* in 1991. The position has come to be viewed more credibly at the school executive level, and among teachers, as a consequence of RE being a substantial curriculum area. The recent inclusion of RE in the system's self review processes including school registration has enhanced its credibility. The recently introduced assistant REC position in large and multi-campus schools has enabled school-based flexibility particularly where there is significant school involvement in parish programs for the sacramental initiation of children and youth.

2. Understanding Religious Education

The study found that religious education, in the Catholic school is in two main domains: the classroom RE program and the education-in-faith dimension. It is consistently subjected to change, particularly from external influences. Additionally, differences for the REC mean that their leadership requires the education of the students and generally that of the teachers, and in the secondary school the REC consistently has the largest faculty. Significantly it was found that the REC is leading in an area that is increasingly demanding and at times not seen as popular or essential.

Changes in Religious Education

The study found that there have been four distinct understandings of classroom RE over the period of the REC position: these include programs from catechetical materials, life-experience reflection from magazines, school-based RE programs based on archdiocesan guidelines, and systematic archdiocesan RE curricula. The study also identified great change in the faith-in-action domain of the REC position. It included initially the pastoral activities undertaken by the members of religious orders; counselling; sex and family education, and still includes the prayer and liturgy, retreats and outreach programs. Increasingly there is a trend for other leaders and teachers to provide some leadership to the faith-in-action domain of the Catholic school.

The REC and the Teachers

In Catholic schools the REC was introduced primarily to assist principals with the development and formation of teachers as Catholic adults. The study affirmed the pivotal role of teachers as religious educators in Catholic schools and found that RECs are generally making a positive impact on teachers, especially in relation to the RE curricula and also the liturgical and prayer life of the school.

However the study identified concerns such as teachers thinking the REC position is too complex for effective achievement by one person and noted that some RECs are not seen as credible classroom teachers. It showed concern that frequently there are small numbers of teachers applying for REC vacancies, while

among the RECs there is variable capacity to address the religious and faith questions of people in the school community.

3. Mission of Catholic Education in the Catholic Church

The study found that the REC position has contributed substantially to the mission of the Catholic school as it educates religiously and promotes faith and action to make God known in the world. It also identified the need for the continuation of the position, suggesting that it may be more imperative now than in the past. The study found a need for the Catholic community to give new energy to how it engages teachers in missionary and religious endeavours at the personal, communal and public levels.

However, the study identified the need for the REC and all in Catholic school leadership, at a time when Catholic schools are seen as successful, to make more explicit and accessible for the students the meaning of the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church. It identified new questions about what it means to be a Catholic and connected to parish while working as REC in a Catholic school, given many parish communities are now vulnerable. The study identified concerns about how the RECs might find appropriate ways of working with parents in promoting the mission of the Gospel and supporting them in the religious education of their children. It noted the mission imperative of ensuring that teachers make accessible the Gospel to the students in the Catholic school by actively promoting their own religious and faith formation.

The Catholic Church Since Vatican II

The study affirmed the leadership of the CEO in its courageous decision to introduce the REC position with the renewed emphasis on Christian baptism as the central mark for all Christians to be actively involved in the mission of the Church. The renewal of the Council reawakened the ministry of the laity, and in Catholic school education called for a more active engagement with RE. The introduction of the REC position was a most far reaching strategy undertaken to address and implement the renewal of the Council.

However, the study found there was a need to find new ways to attract people to the position while nurturing current RECs so that Catholic schooling might continue as an effective agent of making God known. It saw a need to promote further religious and theological study among all Catholic leaders to develop a greater religious confidence and a deeper understanding of the faith and life of the Catholic Church. The study suggested expanding the processes that constitute accreditation to teach RE so that all teachers in the Catholic school might have a greater understanding of, and commitment to, the essential mission of the Catholic school. It identified a need for a clearer articulation of what it means to be Catholic today so as to educate effectively within the mission of the Church, when there is diminished affiliation to Church practice alongside an increasing multi-faith reality.

Transition from Religious to Lay Personnel in Catholic Education

The study found that the REC position was introduced in Sydney at a time when religious congregations staffed the schools, and that they generally embraced the position though some did so with ambivalence. It was introduced to have a person assisting the principal to give focus to understanding the changes initiated by the Council of Vatican II.

The REC position continues to be needed today, as new teachers and all teachers generally still require support to make explicit the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and also to support principals in their need to maintain the catholicity and charism of the school. It identified however, the need for greater understanding of baptism as foundational for the mission of spreading the Gospel, and the need to resist the way that some RECs, attempt singly to be the religious focus of the school.

The REC: A Position in the School and in the Church

The study found the REC position was bi-dimensional with two lines of accountability: educational (school-oriented) and religious (church-oriented), while being primarily located in the school.

However, the study identified concerns regarding this bi-dimensionality and its demands on RECs who are often in their first position of leadership. It identified need for a review of the tendency for some RECs to make the focus of the position its liturgical and ecclesial dimensions at the expense of the RE curriculum. The study found the need for the REC, together with the principal and all members of the school's leadership, to explore how the school understands itself as part of the Church and how it relates to the parish.

4. Leadership of the Principal and the REC

The study reiterated that the REC is a leadership position established to support the principal, particularly in making manifest the mission of the Catholic school in the areas of RE and faith-in-action.

However it found in regard to religious leadership that some principals appear reticent about their own role as religious leader, and some have not undertaken studies in religion and theology. The study identified that it is only since the early 1990s that the principal's position description named the principal as the religious leader of the school. It found that those RECs who operate from the stance that the REC position is more religious than educational are generally perceived as one-dimensional and less effective as RECs. It noted how recent research on succession planning for the principal, in identifying the challenges of religious leadership, has led indirectly to a greater empathy for the challenges of religious leadership inherent in the REC position. The study found an increasing challenge for the system of schools to form and develop new Catholic leaders, given that many current principals and RECs are drawing on their previous experiences as members of religious congregations.

Religious Leadership of the Principal and the REC

The study endorsed the distinctiveness of the religious leadership of the principal and the REC, noting the prime responsibility lies with the principal. It found that RECs tend to be effective according to the capacity of the principal to profile the REC position and the quality of the personal and professional rapport between the principal and the REC.

However, the study generated many concerns about the exercise of religious leadership. It noted connections between the principal's ability to articulate faith and talk about things religious and the non-competitive promotion of the REC's own religious leadership, affirming that RECs are most effective when they understood that the position exists to support the leadership of the principal. The study found that if the principal is not a strong religious leader then negative consequences emerge when the responsibility is handed to the REC without a shared faith commitment. The study found that despite the school having an effective REC, students perceive religion as unimportant if the principal and the executive do not promote it; and additionally, when the principal and REC are seen to share a common vision and relate well, then the leadership of the REC is seen as most productive. It found that principals worry more about replacing the REC than any other position on the executive and that it is usually the only position they have not held themselves. It found that the requirement for graduate study in RE/theology for RECs, and not for principals, distorts the central vision of the Catholic school.

Who Wants to Lead as REC?

The study identified a scarcity of applicants for REC positions that has been consistent since its introduction. It is suggested that the diverse demands of the position contribute to this, as well as the fact that the focus of the position is in the religious domain. Given that Australians generally are not an overtly religious people, to make one's ministry and profession in this area is challenging and 'different'.

However the study found that the specialisation of the leadership of the REC has often been unhelpful for secondary teachers in their career moves, and that the REC tends to be a 'lonely' position because it is counter cultural and has no parity within the school. It further found that teachers are deterred from being an REC because they can access other leadership positions, including assistant principal, without undertaking graduate studies in RE/theology. There was found a greater willingness, especially in the primary school, for teachers to share the position. Additionally it suggested that given the significance of the position for Catholic schools, coupled with its demands, it is proposed that it not be the first leadership position undertaken by teachers. One significant deterrent to taking up the position is the need for the REC to relate well to both the principal and the parish priest.

5. Organisational Structures and Supports for the REC

The study affirmed the educational vision that led to the establishment of the REC position in Sydney Catholic schools and it endorsed the consistent promotion and resourcing that the Sydney CEO has provided, even prior to government funding being available to Catholic schools. The study noted that more recent integration of religion with general education has the added potential to consolidate the REC position.

However, it identified concerns about the way the REC position was initially introduced and identified with the Religious Education team while other leadership positions are supported by the Human Resources team of the CEO. This has resulted in parallel streams of professional development for principals and RECs. It found that all but the last of the seven REC position descriptions have been prepared by the Religious Education team, without a shared contribution from the Human Resources team.

CEO Policy, Induction and Professional Development of RECs

The study found that the REC position has contributed to and strengthened the Catholic character of the school by being established as a CEO system position and supported from the CEO central office. It affirmed the policies, position descriptions and incremental supports for the REC including membership on the executive, graduate study in RE and/or theology, REC allowance, specific REC time allocation, induction and professional development programs, and support from regional and central RE personnel. Additionally, requirements and support for teachers to be accredited to teach RE and the provision of credible archdiocesan RE curricula are highly valued.

However the study identified ambivalence when RECs, in applying for other leadership positions, are told that graduate study in RE/theology limits their educational competence. There is ambivalence when most professional development for the REC has been in the religious domain and principals at the school level need to support the REC as educational leader. The study found inconsistencies when principals resist the system requirement for the REC to be a member of the school executive and when RECs in the 'acting' capacity without the study requirement are perceived to be more effective than an REC who has completed the graduate study. It also identified concerns about professional development for RECs when CEO programs tend to be general without providing particular development for more experienced RECs, and when programs are generally role-related without involving priests and principals with RECs. The study identified that support for RECs and RE is diminished when regional offices do not have RE advisers or the position is shared, and when regional consultants are perceived not to be involved with the REC and the religious life of the school.

REC in the School's Organisation

The study found the REC position, while existing for the benefit of teachers, is most dependent on the leadership and relationship of the principal and the REC. It affirmed the positive impact that has ensued from the REC being a member of the school executive.

However, areas of ambivalence for the REC were noted as policy, supports and structures have been determined at the system level and require implementation at the school level. The study identified ambiguity in that the CEO published position description states the REC has delegated responsibility for the RE program, thereby realistically limiting the principal's real power of delegation. It identified how the impact of religious leadership is influenced by symbolic factors such as where the REC is located in the school building, the level of secretarial assistance available and the REC's involvement in the selection of RE faculty and in time-tabling strategies.

Further Changes in the REC Position

The study found that the REC position is valued and that it continues to be needed; however, it is needed differently. The study suggests a broadened and flattened approach to religious leadership will be more effective for articulating the mission of the Catholic school. It indicated that the current REC position should be maintained but that its structures be reviewed to address the religious contribution of all teachers in the Catholic school. The study suggested that the current strength of the CEO system, including school personnel, be engaged in discerning new religious supports for Catholic schools.

The suggested changes that could enhance the REC position include study leave opportunities for long-serving RECs and some assisted transfers between schools for RECs to access acting positions, thereby creating employment flexibility. The study identified consideration of the REC being 'tied to' the leadership of the principal, so that a new principal appoints the REC, and/or the REC position is re-negotiated when a new principal is appointed. It suggested that a flattened approach to religious leadership be attempted by experimentation with interested principals so that the religious and educational domains are strengthened for all members of the executive. It found that the title of REC as 'coordinator' does not fit the REC position when compared with demands of other coordinators. The study suggested experimentation and variations between schools according to the RECs involvement in parish sacramental programs.

Conclusion

This research affirmed the achievements of Catholic schools and the multiple ways that schools in the Sydney system attend to the mission by making God known among the students and families of the community. It highlighted how the introduction of the REC position has enabled this mission to be more explicit and

focused. It showed also that as the school continually reinterprets what it means to be a Catholic school in changing social and ecclesial contexts, there are implications for religious leadership that need to be addressed.

The relevance of this study therefore for Catholic education is in the findings that have been generated and the methodology itself. The method of the study recognised the complex and interconnected nature of religious leadership in Catholic schools and it engaged a process that sought to provide opportunity for individuals to share their experience. In the context of a system of Catholic schools, or any individual school, discussion of religious leadership needs to take into account the concrete circumstances where individual leaders each day live out what it means to be a religious leader. The study reminds those entrusted with the formulation of leadership and educational policies of the complex set of demands faced by principals, RECs and others in leadership as they contribute to the task of understanding and exercising religious leadership in Catholic schools.

In summary, the study indicated a need for additional ways to be found to exercise religious leadership. It indicated the need for a different approach, with more people involved at the leadership and team level, so that all educators know that the future of Catholic schools depends on them. The study highlighted the need for greater understanding of religious leadership, especially as exercised by the principal and the REC, and as delegated by the principal. It identified the need for closer consideration of the Church context in which religious education in the mission of the school is exercised. The relationship of the school to the wider community and the changing reality of religion in society are factors that will continue to impact on the life of the Catholic school.

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AN EDUCATOR'S FAITH

Dr. Mark Chater

Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln, UK

Historical Development: the Destruction and Rediscovery of a Stance for Teachers

Religious educators will understand the rationale of their work according to whether and how they themselves are religious and also according to the cultural and legal context in which they are qualified and employed. Thus, an educator who is personally a Christian and who works in a church-based or Christian-based school will probably see R.E. as some extension of, or in relationship with, the nurturing or evangelising mission of the church. An educator with no set beliefs working in a secular school will be likely to see the nature and purpose of R.E. differently, making less reference to theology and more to curriculum philosophy, or perhaps to recent studies of spirituality. Points of greater interest arise when a Christian educator works in a secular environment, or when an educator in a Christian environment finds that their faith has evolved until it is significantly different from the sponsoring church, or when an educator's faith has remained the same while the church's has evolved. In such cases, old tensions between models of R.E., and between open and closed, authoritarian and democratic emphases in Christian theology, can re-surface to challenge either the belief-system of the educator or the environment, or both.

Our interest here is in how the evolution of models of R.E. has first changed, then undermined and finally created a crisis in the stance of the teacher. The tradition of nurture and catechism in Christianity had always contained the seeds of this crisis in its ambiguous attitude to the role of the educator, emphasising at some times the paramount nature of doctrinal truth and at other times various aesthetic, emotional or experiential priorities in the learner or learning community. It is clear that Augustine's educational thinking, as expressed in *De Doctrina Christiana*, was caught by an early form of this ambiguity (Augustine, 396, p. 117). By the time that Christian and modern Europe was itself in question, the catechetical enterprise as interpreted by Jungmann (1955) called for both a revival of the

doctrinal message and a new skilled pedagogy, believing that doctrine should be printed on children's minds, but implying that it should be done through accessible resources and open questioning (Smart and Horder, 1975, p. 152; Sawicki, 1988, p. 279). A contemporary teacher echoes this tension in his description of his own view that 'The child has the right to receive the good news and pedagogy means meeting the child where they are on the faith journey'.

When the secular-based understanding of R.E. emerged in Europe from its Christian counterpart, it only gradually developed its own pedagogical insights. The genetic strain of ambiguity in the role of the teacher tended to be passed on to Protestant and then to secular theory. Continental European governments of the 19c, when leaning towards Protestantism, used their emergent public school system to defend their politico-religious position in Europe, and more democratic or radically secular experiments in education were seen as unusual (Bantock, 1984, pp. 131ff.). Nevertheless, the initial logic of a movement away from transmissive methods resided in some Protestant educators' search for an effective pedagogy: Schleiermacher's distrust of clergy and of theological language (Sykes, 1971, pp. 38–44) created a mutual divergence between him and traditional ecclesial educators. Pestalozzi disliked catechisms and wanted to see religious education as part of a whole educational process (Ulich, 1968, pp. 224ff). These thinkers contributed substantially to a change in pedagogy that claimed to place the learner at the center of education, with implied – but rarely spelt out – changes to the expectations placed on the teacher.

The modern project that envisioned and enacted a potentially secular public education also put under way a major change in the understanding of the reasons and means of studying religion. The new insights of the 19c and 20c, now collectively known as phenomenology, are variously ascribed to Edmund Husserl in 1913, van der Leeuw in the 1930s and Ninian Smart in the 1960s, *inter alia*. The phenomenological movement was both an ideology of ideal religion as spirit and a methodology of religious study as pure vision of spiritual reality. In the form it took when popularised by Ninian Smart, however, it became the means whereby a secular, critical model of R.E., already nascent, could break free into its own life and establish its own educational credibility (Smart, 1968). For one contemporary teacher, this is understood as an assumption that 'Religious experience is a part of the human condition, and therefore education should acknowledge and address it ... R.E, uniquely gives, as its main contribution, some insights into what makes humans tick'.

From this dynamic there also emerged the critiques of indoctrination (Snook, 1972; Hull, 1984, p. 182) as an undesirable activity or aim, albeit hard to define adequately. Confessional theory has on occasion attempted to reverse this charge with a defence of religious nurture and a counter-accusation of liberal rationality (Theissen, 1993, pp. xi and 3); but amongst many religious educators the general notion that indoctrination is undesirable remains, although in the case of some Christian educators it exists as an awkward backdrop to their work:

At 18 I did not want to buy into confessionalism, although I was a practising Catholic. I was critical of the confessional approach in the profession,

especially its uncritical nature. I had a Catholicism that was critical, searching, doubting, creating discomfort—especially on moral theology and on doctrine.

I try to offer young people a taste of God ...meeting the needs of unchurched learners is very difficult.

The role of the teacher in contributing to some form of religious change, development or transformation of the learner was never completely theorised out of existence. Smart aimed to break down what he saw as false distinctions between factual information on religion and direct personal experience of it. He added personal reflection and advice as a teacher:

‘You have, temporarily, to become a bit of an insider in order to judge another faith; but then you need to use your own judgement. Nothing in this procedure of becoming a bit of an insider demands any change of religion or worldview on your part. But it may alter some of your perceptions. There is nothing disloyal in this, if, that is, you care about loyalty to your existing commitment’ (Smart, 1995, p. 10).

John Dunne developed a Christian and inter-religious metaphor, steeped in theology and psychology, of the educator and the learner as ‘passing over’ from one position to another in order to understand (Dunne, 1972, p. 224). The movement of passing over and returning made references to mystical traditions in both west and east. It challenged educators in both confessional and secular contexts to understand their work as more transformative and more complex than their respective theories had allowed up to that point.

R.E. is not about teaching pupils to be religious ...but it should aim to understand beliefs, and to see that beliefs impact on actions.

John Hull’s consideration of the relationship between confessional and secular philosophies of the aims of R.E. touches at several moments on the motivation of the educator. We have seen that, typically, a teacher in confessional mode will probably share some assumptions about religious truth and religious knowledge that mark out a distinctive position from the secular model. Hull identifies an underlying tension between the sense of finality, authority, revelation and discipleship required of Christian religious educators, or rather of those working within a Christian confessional framework, and the sense of critical openness, individual judgement, reason and detachment normally required in secular models of R.E. (Hull, 1984, pp. 212ff). We can observe that it is possible to detect a family resemblance between these tensions, which also appear periodically in classical Christian theology, in the guise of a conflict between the apparent wisdom of personal experience and the claimed authority of tradition. In the work of the catechists cited above we see it. In the self-understanding of John Henry Newman as a Catholic historical theologian, it was a pattern of church history, a ‘never-dying duel’ between authority and

private judgement, 'alternately advancing and retreating as the ebb and flow of the tide'; it was 'necessary for the very life of religion' that this 'warfare should be incessantly carried on' (Newman, 1865, 1976, p. 169).

Hull also refers to Christian history, but as a warning against conformity. He argues how frequently, in Christian history, saints are recognised

'...because in their docility and their obedience they were faithful children of the Church, whereas those who thought for themselves were dangerous, proud, and even heretical' (Hull, 1991, p. 16).

By contrast, most Western educators and many Christian religious educators now value autonomous critical reflectiveness highly as a goal of religious education. Hull's analysis allows for a difference of intention between the Christian-based and secular-based educator. This is taken to mean that Christian-based educators may intend and plan for educational outcomes related to faith and faith-content, whereas secular-based educators may intend and plan for critical openness alone (Hull, 1984, p. 222). Whether this is a necessary and absolute distinction can be questioned. Christian-based educators may intend educational outcomes according to their faith, but these intentions will usually be in addition to, and qualified by, their other educational intentions, and this will inevitably draw them closer to their secular neighbour. We should also note that the learner's agency and intention is every bit as important, and may not be consistently Christian, even in a church school.

R.E. offers an opportunity to be always flexible and responsive to pupils' concerns and ways of learning. I can be led by them, and they can bring their issues to the table.

Hull's strongest instinct seems to be to reconcile the secular and nurturing forms of the subject, arguing that both are ultimately in the service of human self-understanding (Hull, 1993) and future global survival (Hull, 2001), making the religious educator, whatever their working model, an agent of social and spiritual transformation.

Jeff Astley's development of a philosophy of Christian-based R.E. attempts a dialectic between critical openness and Christian, nurture-based education, resulting in a qualified variant of critical openness (Astley, 1994, p. 99). Conceding that the reflective potential of individuals should be developed, he implies that not everyone will move towards critical reflectiveness in the same way or to the same extent, and that this form of inequality is fitting (Astley, 1994, p. 74). Trevor Cooling adds to this debate with his claims for the critical rationality of Christian religious belief, and by implication the critical openness of nurturing education (Cooling, 1994, pp. 76ff). Among many other theorists of Christian R.E., Brian Hill is notable for applying principles of critical openness to the Christian-based study of Christianity (Hill, 1994). These sources illustrate a widespread and varied theoretical response

to the challenges to the traditional stance of the religious educator, both accepting and importing critical methods and challenging the claims of critical rationality.

Openness to pluralism in the Christian educational context can also extend to a Christian spirituality of vocation to teaching. Building on his earlier work on shared Christian praxis of R.E., Thomas Groome now offers a perspective on the spirituality of the Christian-based educator based on community and diversity. Since community is the essential context of nurture (Groome, 1998, pp. 171ff), and since this community is always plural – there being many Catholics, many Christians, many people in dialogue, leading to a dialectical open vision (Groome, 1998, pp. 393ff) – Catholic diversity must exist, should be celebrated and should oppose any totalising ‘isms’ (Groome, 1998, pp. 410–11). His earlier emphasis was on learners as agent-subjects engaged in a holistic form of learning that he calls ‘conation’ (Groome, 1991, p. 85). Conation is a correction of the perceived imbalances in the Western epistemological tradition, especially its recent, modernist preoccupation with the cognitive. Conation engages the whole thinking, feeling and acting person in learning and change. Groome is clear that teachers are to be ‘leading learners’ (Groome, 1991, p. 449), subject to the same conation process. Thus the stance of the teacher is to be open to ontological change. This is seen as a kind of ministry involving personal transformation, and as an art. In its full impact, Groome’s theory is related to Freire’s work on transformational learning, something he acknowledges (Groome, 1998, p. 103). It is affirmed elsewhere philosophically in Martin’s (1998) argument that Polanyi’s model of personal knowledge can be used to enrich the clarificatory power of critical reflection, and can do so without undermining confidence in the nature of religious knowing in ecclesiastical contexts. Groome’s is a theological and spiritual portrait of the Christian R.E. teacher embracing diversity, resisting doctrinal tyranny, seeking the grace of perpetual growth and change, and engaging consistently with the young in a shared praxis of wisdom.

In its pedagogy, implied ecclesiology and spirituality, Groome’s shared praxis is objectionable to many conservatives in the church (Manning, 2003, p. 15). Church-based nurture has produced other visions of the teacher, which appear to be harmonious with shared praxis but avoid its more challenging epistemological positions. For instance, Morgenthaler (1999) offers a multi-disciplinary discussion of spiritual formation, with a special focus on processes by which children come to mature faith influenced by the worship, culture and values of their family and congregation. The book tends to be suspicious of secular, open-ended or developmentalist analyses such as Coles and Fowler (Morgenthaler, 1999, p. 43) and of Berryman’s unorthodox, child-centred approach, accused of ‘mysticism’ (p. 11). Instead, Morgenthaler tends to stay with a mainly ecclesiastical basis of the process (hence her use of the term ‘formation’) with a set of assumptions about declining church attendance, declining morality and the importance of stable family life. The problems are social, the solutions ecclesial: house groups, music and enculturation will play a part (p. 170). Even here, however, there is, in the mention of enculturation, a limited acknowledgement that the tradition must evolve.

The model of teacher as learner, artist, minister and agent of change has added to the crisis in the stance of the teacher. Conservative church educators reject it, recognising its power to alter the nature of religious affiliation by democratising the character of religious formation. Secular teachers may sometimes be suspicious of its transformative aims, especially if they adhere to a self-image as neutral purveyors of factual information about world religions, a model wrongly described as phenomenology. Groome's model itself is challenging, hard to emulate and, because so subject to the grace of change, a contributor of uncertainty.

My religious views have changed. I have become more open ecumenically, I am at ease with worship in other Christian churches and more appreciative of eastern religious philosophy. I've developed a deep spiritual response to Judaism through holocaust studies. I would describe my former self as a 'text book Catholic'. Being a religious educator has made me search.

The geography of the rationales for R.E., always ambiguous, has now changed to the point that its practitioners have an unsettled relationship to their work. Since the theory of Christian religious education borrows comfortably from its secular correspondent, and secular-based models can be seen addressing transformative objectives, the stances of teachers are determined less by their cultural environment and employing school, and more by their individual conditions. Teachers of R.E. report that they have more professional freedom to shape their subject than is afforded to teachers of other subjects. Most of them value their subject very highly, thinking of it as special and distinctive, if not unique, in the curriculum. They invest in it personally and it seems to repay them with new insights.

Teachers' Spiritualities and the Spiritualisation of Teachers

Crossing all boundaries, an independent, critical and multi-disciplinary collection of understandings of spirituality in education, in the lives of the young and their teachers and families, has gained increasing global attention since the 1980s. These spiritualities are diversely understood and practiced as denominationally or traditionally informed, and at other times not (Erricker et al., 1997, pp. 114ff), as a necessarily naïve attempt by the young to establish meaning outwith the discredited frames of reference of the old religious systems (Tacey, 2001); as something uncomfortably caught between tradition and experience (Chater, 2000); as nature-related and in need of recovery (Thomas, 2001); as informed by reading and intervention (Trousdale, 2004); as universally human (Hay with Nye, 1998) and as a legitimate entitlement for all young people, regardless of religious commitment (SCAA, 1996). The awareness of spirituality has spread to curriculum study in the form of the recognition of the inter-personal and intra-personal as forms of knowledge and intelligence (Gardner, 1993) and has come out in educational management theory in a recognition that organisations must bow to the mysterious in the natural world and within people, if they are to survive and learn (Senge, 1990). These

new recognitions are characterised by a willingness to take forms of spirit seriously as elusive but essential, to recognise experience as a form of knowledge and, at best, to refrain from defining it. The emergence of an interest in children's, young people's and teachers' spiritualities in secular contexts borrows to some extent from the formative aims and processes of nurture, but lives without the defining habit.

Teachers of R.E. will understand spirituality, and experience it, in so many ways that this discussion cannot adequately voice. The purpose here is only to focus on patterns in their spiritualities as teachers of R.E., i.e. those aspects that derive from, or reflect back upon, their feelings about their aims and achievements as professionals. In this restricted sense, to speak of spirituality in teachers is to draw light from the new burst of diverse interpretations described above, and to accept that teachers are finding many ways to articulate their sense of meaning in, and their sense of relationship with their work. R.E. teachers will often connect the history of their meaning-making at work with the history of their own theological or spiritual development.

I would describe myself as a 'de la Salle teacher'. I mean that I was influenced by my Salesian education at 6th form and in teacher training. Although the Catholic content of my training was minimal, I absorbed Salesian values of child-centred education.

Naturally enough, perhaps, the sense of vocation frequently emerges as part of the R.E. teacher's self-understanding. This would be expected amongst teachers serving in church-based R.E. contexts, but even in those intending to work on a secular model, the sense of vocation is plangent:

Ever since I was little I have wanted to teach.

Seeing them [children] struggling to understand, and finally getting it, makes me feel as if I am doing something useful.

The connotations of vocation are often positive, aspirational, spiritual and subtly influenced by biblical literature. The biblical influence is very rarely made explicit by teachers. Nevertheless, its cultural force is there, for instance, in the feeling that vocation is personal to individuals and opposed, in some way, to other, unnamed, darker forces, and that it is so important and good it may even be felt as salvific (Matthew 22:14). Or again, to have a calling might mean to be called out of the ordinary or unsatisfactory, or from those whose unworthiness or apathy traps them (I Samuel 3; Matthew 22:1–14). Also, vocational spirituality may carry themes of suffering, being misunderstood, having cherished ideals trampled on and looking for delayed reward (Jeremiah 8:19–20; Jeremiah 20:7–9; Romans 8:18). The idea of vocation therefore performs, at the very least, a hidden task by suggesting something of the person's feelings and assumptions about themselves, what makes them different from their fellows, and what makes them teach.

A danger in vocational spiritualities is that they seem to remove teaching from the external to the internal realm; the main focus is on the teacher's feelings about him/herself, even while claiming to focus on children.

When I help them [children], and they turn and thank me, or they show me their work with pride, I feel as if I have done something really hugely important.

Not all vocational spiritualities adopt this form of narcissism and romanticism. This type, however, needs attention because of the function it performs. This spirituality exists in strong opposition to spiritualities of work and of profession. In the long tradition of research in Christian ministry, *vocatio* and *professio* are held as contradictory even when they are interpreted as equally necessary (Campbell, 1975). Professionalism suggests that personal commitment is both enriched and proved by accountability and by the meeting of standards of knowledge or competence. But a sense of calling detached from professional realities (because they might be unpleasant, or changing too fast) becomes 'spiritualised' and vacates the workplace of any spirit-based discourses on work, creating a vacuum that can be filled by technicist, instrumentalist curriculum values, which will gain uncontested dominance.

'The technicist values of the national curriculum seem to have obscured the vision of education as a process whereby individuals become more human..., deepen their self awareness,... examine their desires, attitudes and beliefs,...and so transform themselves and the social context...'
(Lally, 1993, p. 41).

A privatised or spiritualised teacher is one who has lost the power to engage her/his spirit with the difficult and rewarding realities. Secular systems will in this way assist teachers working in the system to maintain their private spiritual, religious or moral beliefs on the tacit understanding that these will be held in addition to, but not in contradiction of, the hegemony of ideas in education. Instead, teachers whose spirituality engages with curriculum content, or with political and professional challenges, find that their sense of meaning is retained in the public arena, sustaining not only them but others around them.

Reading or seeing [a text; often a film with moral themes, or literature or scientific information] I was so enthused by it that I developed this urge to pass it on. I'd love to share the enjoyment.

One of my ideals would have been to help pupils on their spiritual journey in Christian terms, for instance through retreats; that their prayer life would have been enriched via me. Now I am more interested in a more pluralistically experiential range, e.g. pupils being moved by a holocaust centre, a synagogue or a walk in the park. I am less one-track, more intuitive and diverse. I would like to see more diverse spiritualities on offer in a Catholic classroom.

In the extended narrative below, a teacher tells of conversations with two very troubled 16–19 year old students who had just returned to school from unsuccessful work placements, and reflects publicly on the value of what she did, as judged by her, by the students or, putatively, by her managers or evaluators..

My conversation with (Student 1) lasted about half an hour. It took place huddled round the radiator in a cold corridor – the only place where we could find some privacy. The previous half-hour I had spent round the same radiator with (Student 2), the student who had been asked to leave her work placement.... I needed (Student 2) to tell me herself the story of what could potentially be a very discouraging, negative experience for her. So – I spent an hour in the corridor with two students while the rest of the class worked on their own with no support from me. Was I right to do so? I've no doubt I had no alternative. But I wonder what would have happened if this had taken place during an...inspection...

The values and spirituality discourse, when shared, strengthens teachers and others who hear it. Change is the outcome for teachers whose spirituality is open. Clare Richards, teaching in a Catholic secondary school, offers many accounts of how open interactions with pupils result, in small ways, in challenges to official hypocrisy in the church (for instance over clerical celibacy), in development of her own theology and spirituality and in changes to school and parish practice (Richards, 1994).

Religious Educators: Critical Resources or Catechetical Tools

The teacher is a resource, both interpreting and having her performance interpreted by the printed and other learning resources in use. By examining some resources we can establish how this mutual interpretation proceeds and can see the indirect ways in which interpretation changes educators' views.

The British context of Catholic education has been, over the last fifteen years, the arena for a conflict between resources promoting critical, reflective open praxis by teachers and learners, and those promoting the reinforcement of doctrinal truth. Several of these resources have been adopted for use in other national systems.

The major book series for pupils in Roman Catholic schools between the ages of 11 and 14 from the late 1980s was entitled *Weaving the Web* (Lohan and McClure, 1988). Sponsored by the official project of the English and Welsh bishops, it presented less as a textbook series and more as a curricular framework, inviting teachers to interpret it freely. In aiming to '...challenge pupils to examine their own life stance, to deepen their personal faith commitment and to respect that of others' (Lohan and McClure, 1988, p. 11), the series managed to appear consistent both with catechetical priorities and with mainly secular R.E. thinking in Britain. The series addressed world religions in their own terms, and examined Christian truth claims and church practices critically. It was heavily criticised by traditionalists (Read, 1991) and in due course was replaced by the current Catholic textbook

series, *Icons* (Martin et al., 2000). At the same time, the equivalent project for pupils in Catholic primary schools (age 5–11), *Here I Am*, adopted a similarly pupil-centred approach with a focus on skilled learning and teaching, a holistic model of knowledge and an openness to the study of other world religions (Byrne and Malone, 1992). It, too, suffered correction in the form of an advisory statement from the bishops, defining the aim of R.E. to be:

‘...to promote knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, its relevance to the ultimate questions of life, and the skills required to engage in religious thinking’ (National Board, 1994, p. 7).

After some steps towards a reflective, epistemologically whole and tentatively pluralist paradigm for teachers and learners, the system retreated again into the certainties of Catholic truth.

Icons deserves special examination because of the tensions it establishes in the practitioner. Its coverage of themes is broad; whereas all the chapter headings of *Weaving the Web* were based always on clear universal generative themes for pupils, the replacement series uses some generative themes, such as belonging and identity, and some doctrinal topics, such as Jesus and Mass.

Each chapter uses objectives to define learning processes and their intended outcomes clearly, in line with practice in Britain and elsewhere. Typically, the book series has objectives that tend to break down into three kinds: those that are knowledge- and understanding-based, those that are confessional and those that are skills-based. An example found in a chapter on the church is typical in following this three-fold structure:

‘In this section we will be learning:

- what gives a community its special identity
- that the church receives its identity from Jesus
- how to find your way round the bible’ (Martin et al., 2000: 16)

The first objective, with its use of ‘what’, suggests a form of cognitive knowledge and understanding as the outcome; the second, in contrast, with its use of ‘that’ followed by an apparently factual statement, denotes a confessional outcome; the third suggests a skill. The series as a whole has much more frequent uses of the first and second kinds of objective (knowledge-understanding and confessional, respectively) than the third (skills). This structure has several noteworthy features that are widely repeated throughout the series.

First, the language that begins by including both teacher and learners in its statement of the objective (‘we will be learning’) has turned, by the end of the statement, to a more hierarchical statement of how the learner alone will be helped (‘how to find your way around the bible’). The series has difficulty deciding whether it is there to organise pupil-centred learning on the basis of a Groome-influenced ecclesiology of community, and a theology of teacher as leading learner, or to

bolster the hierarchical truth concepts of the church; we have already seen that this is not a new tension, but it is a recurrent fault-line in this series.

Second, the objectives that deal with acquisition of knowledge and understanding or with skills (the first and third objectives in the above example) have the potential to give the learner an active role. The first objective invites the learner to offer some investment of his/her experiences; the conceptual and speculative nature of the understanding is fluid enough to include elements of evaluation. The third will allow the learner to be active in a less intuitive and more technical sense as he/she practices and applies the skill. The learner may ask why this skill is necessary, but this reflection is not countenanced in the objectives of the chapter, or of others. The largest and most intractable problem comes with the second objective. 'That the church receives its identity from Jesus' is a doctrinal statement. It is Catholic truth. At first sight, it appears to offer none of the room for speculative, evaluative reflection called for by the first objective, and certainly none of the technical skills of the third. It seems to be an inert piece of content. How are pupils expected to learn it? What does it mean to learn the truth of such content? Is it learned in the confines of a lesson? If the objective is not met by some pupils (for instance, by those who question the institutional church's historical link with Jesus, or find its ethical stances to be incompatible with its claimed identity) what impact is there on the attainment of that objective, and consequently on assessment and on the teacher's evaluation of the lesson? How is the teacher expected to hold and share this content? What opportunity, if any, is envisioned in this objective for the teacher to doubt the statement, even if only as a prelude to showing its truth?

Icons closes a child down. And it closes me down.

How does the teacher expect pupils to respond to a form of knowledge that cannot be examined? How will the teacher's presentation of this unquestioned truth be received by learners whose education in history, science or philosophy trains them to examine and test, whose language training requires them to weigh meaning, and whose artistic subjects invite free expression?

The least that can be said is that this kind of objective sits awkwardly with the other two kinds, creating tension between the teacher's mission to open minds and the church's desire to have truth uniformly accepted.

But the child is not at the centre of Icons; the bishops and clergy are.

A resource widely used with the 14-16 age group approaches Catholic Christianity with a greater degree of plurality and an attempt at objectivity. Anne Burke's *Dimensions of Christianity* was published in 1998 specifically for pupils in Roman Catholic schools studying Christianity for their exams at age 16. In such schools the policy is to focus the content mainly or totally on Catholic belief and practice. Therefore, prominence is given to this tradition when allocating proportions of prose description to specific issues and perspectives. An appendix provides extra information on the Catholic church's official pronouncements on several issues (Burke, 1998: 159). Normal status is given to Roman Catholicism, with an assumption that all readers will feel they belong to it: chapters are entitled such as 'Reconciliation: our way to God' (Burke, 1998: 94).

At other times, objective and open language is used, as in ‘Christians believe that Jesus was also God’s son, and that he saves God’s people from sin, and offers them eternal life.’ (ibid., 128). Burke is clearly open to the use of pupil experience and exploration (ibid., 5).

While it implicitly accepts and describes the reality of a diversity of Christian churches (ibid., 9–27) the approach is still monolithic in the description of Christian ideas and practices overall:

‘...all Christians celebrate an important part of their faith ...’ (ibid., 9)

‘The Catholic church is also deeply involved in peace-making attempts’ (ibid., 106)

These statements tend to give an impression of uniform belief and practice, avoiding disputed questions and plurality of practice or interpretation (e.g., on women, sexuality, liturgy, the arms trade, liberation theology or global economics) which divide all churches along a radical – conservative spectrum.

Questions and other tasks typically test and strengthen knowledge through investigation; they also develop understanding and evaluation. These three skill areas are identified in the national examination syllabus at 16. While questions will require a cognitive and affective familiarity with the gospel text and core ethical beliefs, they do not require, for instance, doctrinal assent or a prayer life:

‘What challenges to their discipleship do Christians experience today? ...How might a person’s Christian values affect their family life and personal wealth?’ (ibid., 135)

The tensions exposed here will not wait indefinitely for resolution. Curriculum and pedagogical priorities are capable of encouraging teachers to end the discomfort of confusion. The English education system has, for the last three years, had a major national focus on literacy across the curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 14. The teacher training material to support this project has included specific guidance on how language is used in R.E. Some examples quoted here illustrate the critical assumptions being made about the metaphorical, often non-literal and poetic nature of religious language:

‘The cultural context is important in interpreting events, responses, attitudes and dress codes appropriately.

The inadequacy of human language is a factor for a subject that deals with ultimate mystery. Analogy, metaphor and simile are therefore important.

‘...Pupils ...need to ...develop a discursive style of writing which is impersonal, so that they can compare, understand and use technical terminology and forms of language distinctive to Christianity and the other principal religions of Britain’ (DfES, 2004, p. 4)

This training material aims to raise standards of attainment in R.E. in conjunction with improving literacy. No teacher making conscientious use of this material would be likely continue with an uncritical use of language about religious and moral concepts. It follows that pupils taught by those teachers should demonstrate, among other skills, more advanced critical thinking, awareness of text, development of arguments and justification of ideas (DfES, 2004, p. 1). From this it is clear that a commitment to a critical literary awareness in R.E. is not consistent with an entirely indoctrinatory or church-driven agenda. Teachers inclining towards the latter approach would have their praxis of R.E. challenged by the priorities of the literacy policy.

Fundamentalist teachers and learners, and those unwilling to move from strongly-held conservative positions on the bible, the church, the nature of God, salvation or moral matters, occupy a distinctive position. In a context that accords with their beliefs, they will perform effectively, but only because the measures of high attainment in learning and of appropriate teaching enshrine religious or moral precepts that are protected from critical enquiry. Forms of knowledge will be overwhelmingly cognitive, and even those religious or spiritual elements taken by non-fundamentalists as experiential or affective will be included by fundamentalists as cognitive. Thus biblical narratives or experiences in prayer are shed of the difficult ambiguities with which non-fundamentalist teachers and learners grapple. Fundamentalist teachers and learners in pluralistic contexts may also perform well, but are more likely to find themselves in conflict philosophically. Learners who take offence at the questioning of their faith can experience this crisis as a positive growth point for learning, without necessarily leading to cynicism. (Crosby et al., 2000, p. 58–59).

Massanari (1998) recounts a student's agitation and final withdrawal at being required to question her own beliefs and values. This is not untypical. Massanari perceived that the student's assumptions about education were technocratic: that education would equip her with useful knowledge and skills; and that critical reflection would corrode cherished beliefs, rather than clarifying or strengthening them. Critical reflection was assumed to be an enemy. Following Habermas, it is argued that knowledge cannot rationally define itself exclusively by the usefulness of transmitting technologically exploitable knowledge. Following Ellul, a culture of utility and technique – the basic ingredients of technocracy – serves to segment knowledge and to remove it from political contexts. In this context, questioning (and, by extension, all critical reflection) comes to seem 'inefficient, impractical and dysfunctional' (Massanari, 1998, p. 160).

That a majority of teachers regard fundamentalism as a problem, and as basically inconsistent with a commitment to educational ideas, is clear. This must be because there are philosophical differences between a closed commitment to certainty and a critical questioning approach, and because specific obstacles, for instance in some hermeneutical approaches and some methods of moral argument, would impede learning and distort teaching.

I am a liberal Christian with a pluralist outlook. I feel that being a fundamentalist, with its exclusivist positions, would make it harder to be an R.E. teacher of integrity. I do not want to imply that there are not some excellent fundamentalist teachers of R.E. out there; but I could not personally reconcile fundamentalist beliefs with the kind of R.E. I theorise and practise.

Toward an Educator's Faith

The vocation of education, as understood in the Western tradition, must call the religious or spiritual teacher away from knowledge-models of revealed truth and towards those of reason; away from narratives of personal chosenness and towards narratives of professional obligation, ethically and spiritually informed; away from hierarchical pedagogies and towards those which invest meaning in the questions and discoveries of the learner, skillfully guided. This movement may be likened to an exodus. It is not restricted to transforming the lives of individual religious pedagogues or their students. Its necessary effect also extends, through them, to religious traditions, drawing them into rational discourse, opening them to experiential material, challenging their reactionary and violent elements and encouraging them to explain themselves by reference to human need and to each other. In the contemporary religious world, religious adherents need an educational faith as much as educational systems need their ethical and spiritual presence; and religious and spiritual traditions, in order to survive and accentuate their most positive characteristics, need education as much as it needs them.

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DIMENSIONS OF ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Anthony J. Kelly

*Institute of Theology, Philosophy and Religious Education,
Australian Catholic University*

Introduction

In this chapter I will develop a number of terms and categories applicable to adult faith development. Given the immense pluralism of religious attitudes, faith commitments and cultural attainments that cut across any age-based generalisations, I must leave a great deal of particular questions to specialists in the various fields, and concentrate on a general framework. I propose to draw attention to the possible hermeneutical and integrative potential of the categories I will treat—for oneself, e.g., as a religious educator, and for others, e.g., the adults who are students or searchers within a particular religious tradition. I refer especially to adults, especially in the context of discussions of faith, spirituality and so forth, in the hope that the terms I outline here will assist an adult discussion of the basic personal issues that arise, especially given the challenges inherent in the present postmodern situation.

My remarks draw a general inspiration from the work of Bernard Lonergan. His methodological contributions are well known in theology, especially in regard to theological method, the development of doctrine, and the relationship between faith and culture and interfaith dialogue. Perhaps due to its complexity his work is seldom used as resource in religious education (Ormerod, 1997; Kelly, 2002), despite Lonergan's early interest in the philosophy of education (Lonergan, 1993). Still, I believe that are some helpful applications to be made, as I hope to show. The most convenient and compendious reference is his *Method in Theology* (Lonergan, 1972). There are of course innumerable commentaries on Lonergan's work and many ways in which it has been applied in different fields (Kelly and Moran, 1999). Space precludes extensive citation and commentary, but at least I can suggest, from a particular perspective, some points of contact with professionals in the religious education field, and so assist them in identifying and integrating the religious, moral, intellectual and spiritual concerns that animate the work to which this chapter contributes.

It will be obvious that my own standpoint is located within the Judaeo-Christian tradition. This means neither that what I have to say precludes a concern for interfaith dialogue, nor that any point I make in this essay cannot be usefully applied to religious or spiritual traditions other than my own.

Interiority

Lonergan's whole approach is intent upon commending a renewed sense of interiority, i.e., a methodological attention to the data of consciousness and its operations (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 83–99). In contrast—but not in opposition to—a purely theoretical or scientific approach to human personhood and the reality of the transcendent, the interiority in question is based in the fundamental datum of self-transcending consciousness, for this is the creative source of meaning as it is objectified in science, scholarship, philosophy and theology. This notion of interiority differs also—but again, not in opposition to—from the 'common sense' of a culture, which is typically an amalgam of religious and cultural tradition, available technologies, the educational structures, and the laws and customs inherent in any given way of life. The focus is not on the socialised ego or the cultural self, but on the source of renewal for any culture and society, namely the dynamics of self-transcendence. Given the differing and often conflicting worlds of common sense, the multiplicity of sciences and the seemingly insoluble problems of philosophy—and the educational theories they give rise to—interiority has emerged as a realm of meaning distinct from common sense or theory, be it scientific or philosophical.

Interiority understood in this way by no means signals a retreat into a form of private inwardness, as though it were moving away from cultural communication or scientific method, for to name the experience of the conscious self and its operations is to touch on the creative root of culture. It opens the way to a collaboration with all sciences, for progress in culture and in science is made possible by exploiting and promoting the dynamics of self-transcendence. The more that is named and recognised, the more one has a basis for discerning the progress and decline in one's culture, and for collaborating in an interdisciplinary manner with other self-transcending subjects who go about the world's work.

The self that is disclosed through the development of interiority in its methodological attentiveness to consciousness is not the diseased self that is the proper study of psychotherapy, not the truncated self reduced to the 'nothing but' of empiricist dogmatism, nor the unemployed self that can find nothing in the consumer society of today to occupy it fully. The self revealed is the self-transcending self, dynamically intending the meaning, truth and value—even to anticipate the ultimate fulfilment which is the proper domain of religion.

The current cultural situation demands an exploration of interiority if there is to be some field of common discourse between various sciences and ethical positions. It searches into that dynamic point of integration which education, and above all, religious education, always intends to identify, for it provides an entry into the religious, moral, intellectual and concretely psychological dimensions of

human experience. Admittedly, there is the immense potential of tradition, religious and otherwise, with all its variations on the theme of the 'Grand Narrative'. The formative power of tradition is often interpreted negatively and extrinsically as necessarily overwhelming the unrepeatable experience of the individual. But development of the language of interiority enables one to find a personal voice speaking 'from the inside out'. Its communication is grounded in the experience of self-transcending consciousness that all human beings possess, to give them an experiential criterion in critically assimilating or even rejecting the grand narratives that are available—for the sake of something better.

Self-Transcendence

And so we ask: What kind of self is the subject of religious education and is disclosed in every aspect of experience, especially the religious? Any possible answer needs to have a working model, sufficiently flexible in its applicability to a wide variety of data, reaching from the most common routine experiences to those of a more religious character. Here, I suggest, 'the self-transcending self' is a basic and workable model. Self-transcendence is disclosed performatively: it is manifest 'in action' (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 6–25; 104–105). It does not rely on an idealised notion of 'spirituality' or metaphysical notions of, say, 'soul' or 'person' or 'God'. Admittedly, no one descriptive phrase hits the nail on the head: self-transcendence tends to give the impression that the 'self' is left behind, but then 'self-realisation' implies that the true self is already in possession and involved in realising its project. There is also that ethical rhetoric of self-renunciation, self-sacrifice, self-abnegation, self-giving and even self-forgetfulness. Consequently, one can distinguish between the inauthentic self to be transcended and the authentic self that is being realised. The implications of the phrase 'self-transcendence' could occasion endless philosophical and psychological discussions if it were taken as a definition of the human subject and its relations with others. But leaving it in its openness of connotation can be an advantage: the self is indefinable. There are two further points however that deserve mention in regard to the meaning of 'self-transcendence'.

First, it has the advantage of referring to a dynamic state of consciousness—the self-in-transcendence—rather than a metaphysically objectivised soul philosophically understood as the core of personal being. I am not against metaphysics and its objective definitions and affirmations, but such objectivity can only be the result of authentic subjectivity, i.e., the self in its conscious operations (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 265 & 292). Hence, self-transcendence is the preferred term. It designates, not a soul abstracted from history, but the self immersed in historical experience.

Secondly, self-transcendence as a phrase at least, and far more as an experience, is set against reductive versions of the self. At the crudest extreme, is the reduction of the self to what can be accessed only in the data of sensation. It may talk about the brain, for example, but without any advertence to the data of consciousness in the experience of sensing, imagining, questioning, understanding, and so forth,

that has made the brain a formal object of scientific investigation and theory. On the other hand, there is a less empirical and a more immanentist version of a self that is radically separated from the objective world. When the conscious self is lacking any criteria for self-transcendence, it is locked in a closed world, at the mercy of its own self-regarding projections. Another possibility is that the self absorbs all reality into its own thinking, as in the philosophy of idealism. Clearly religious education conducted by anyone for any age or stage would be careful of giving the impression that the self is a subjective fabrication on the level of either thought or emotion. Development is not much helped by interpreting the self in autistic or psychopathic terms. I note too that self-transcendence puts the more general term 'spirituality' in a healthy context. Spirituality is not an exotic form of soul culture, but a self-appropriation for the sake of the higher levels of self-transcendence.

Self-transcendence serves as a comprehensive model for human development and self-realisation at least as Lonergan has objectivised it. It appeals to four inter-related levels of conscious operations, as the self expands to new registers of consciousness (Lonergan, 1972, 9–10). For example, the reader's present experience of reading this article is a concrete experience of what is being suggested here.

Empirical Level

One must look at the page and see the print as a necessary preliminary to understanding and reacting to it. The primal experience of sensation and image forming activities has a corresponding precept, 'Be attentive!', for the data of the senses are the immediate world from which all understanding begins. Self-transcendence here means little more than remaining alert, staying awake, positioning one's head and eye in order to pay attention to what is written. The otherness of meaning and truth demands attention to what is immediately experienced.

Intellectual Level

Here the reader puzzles over what the piece of writing means; it leads to an often unnoticed series of insights as we catch on to what is being presented, even if it stimulates the excitement of more questions. Corresponding to this intellectual level of conscious activity is the precept, 'Be intelligent!'. Self-transcendence on this level means transcending the purely animal extraversion of sensory awareness limited to a habitat, to enter the world of meaning and intelligibility. The reader's intelligent activity is at a higher level than an act of ocular vision. On this level, self-transcendence offers an expansion of consciousness into the realm of meaning, as questions seek answers which can never be satisfied by simply having a good look! There is a limitlessly intelligible otherness disclosed in the world of meaning. The self is here involved in a trajectory of searching, expressed in the question, What is the meaning of all that I have found meaningful?

Rational Level

Here readers find themselves reflecting on what is written, and asking themselves, Is it true? Is it a step in the right direction? On this level of conscious activity we ponder the evidence that sense, imagination and intelligence have presented, and come to some kind of judgment, such as 'This is a good book or article; it deals with reality', and so forth—or the opposite. Corresponding to this level of activity is the imperative, 'Be reasonable!', i.e., sift the evidence and make up your mind. There may be no need to do this when it is more a matter of letting the flow of words and ideas work their magic, to divert, entertain and possibly inspire. But the rational level of self-transcendence is in evidence when it demands a passage from the world of mere bright ideas or even fascinating insights, into the world of truth and reality: it takes us to the point where the question is asked, is it true? We may answer Yes or No (with any degree of probability in between). Self-transcendence in the act of judgment makes a more personal claim than sensing, imagining or even generating bright ideas. Performatively, it acknowledges the commanding otherness of reality: it is not to be found on the level of sensation or bright ideas, but in terms of what is affirmed in the considered judgment of the person involved. One may complain of poor eyesight or bad memory or even of not cottoning on to the point, but we tend not to complain about any weakness in judgment. The integrity of the self is at stake in the presence of the commanding otherness of truth. It takes us beyond what we might feel or think or want to be, to face what is objectively the case. Here the self is experienced as caught up in a trajectory that cannot be fully satisfied except in the evidence of an unconditional truth manifested in all the conditioned truths and particular judgments it has made.

Responsible Level

On this level of conscious activity, while it remains based in what is experienced, while it is bound to the reality of what can be understood and affirmed, self-transcendence moves to decision. It can be expressed in the question: Given this is what I understand and judge to be true, what am I to do? The words I have read, the ideas that have come to mind, the judgments I have made, lead to a further demand on the self. The imperative here is 'be responsible!' At this point, consciousness becomes conscience. It is affected by prior feelings for value, and the priority we have set on some values in preference to others. But by awakening to consciousness on this level we become capable of collaborating in a moral universe. Here the self transcends itself according to the demands of the otherness of objective good. It embarks on a trajectory of searching for the worth of all values, and leads to the possibility of any ultimate self-surrender to an unconditional and ultimate good.

No doubt the dynamic structure of conscious self-transcendence can be objectified in other terms and instanced in any number of ways. Here I have drawn attention to the experience of reading; likewise, the experience of conversation involving communication with an actual present other would suggest the same result. For in any conversation worthy of the name, we are being summoned, out of a solipsistic

self-enclosure, to recognise the presence of the other, to attend to what he or she is saying, to what is being meant and communicated in word, gesture, tone and facial expression. It means asking, What do you mean? What are you suggesting? It may remind one of things forgotten, overlooked or dismissed. It invites agreement or disagreement with the judgments that are implied or expressed. It may well result in a new sense of responsibility and moral solidarity with the interlocutor or with those individuals and groups and communities of culture, ethnicity or religion that the conversation partner represents. Whatever the instance, we cannot imagine either writers or readers or conversation partners admitting that they do not need to read or listen to get to the meaning; that what is read or listened to poses no questions; that the truth of the matter, in any case, does not matter; or that the communication has no need to be honest and trustworthy, and that it makes no claims on conscience or responsibility. We either read or meet as self-transcending conscious personal beings, or we remain enclosed in a world limited by an autistic inability to attend, by a dullness or silliness that does not seek to understand, by a levity that is unconcerned with the truth of things, and by an irresponsibility that does not care about what is worthwhile. Since it is not likely that anyone would admit that this was one's desirable and habitual stance, the reality of self-transcendence is the only option—however one chooses to express it (Lonergan, 1972, p. 17).

Clearly, the structure of self-transcendence is applicable to any phase or stage of what can be called religious development. Whether we are young or old, the challenge to attend to the data of experience (understood comprehensively, so as to include social and historical experience), to understand all this, to come to judgment on its truth and to behave accordingly, remains relevant, and, indeed, crucial, if progress is to be made. Religious or any other form of education has nowhere to go if it does not recognise the levels of experiential, intellectual, rational and responsible consciousness here suggested.

The model we have been commending so far could be taken to imply that it is exclusively a movement 'from below', as though it were a gradual expansion and enrichment of consciousness in its self-transcending capacities. But there is also the influence of a movement 'from above' (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 104–107). This can be taken in a general and in a religiously particular sense. In the general sense, developments at the higher level, new insights, informed judgments, more conscientious responsibility, work downward: they enrich one's capacity to experience and attend to data that was previously unnoticed. The more I awaken to moral responsibility in regard, say, to ecology or social justice, the more I will notice the deterioration of the environment or the presence of 'invisible' poor in our midst. This will make my questions more keen and searching as to the causes, conditions, structures and effects of the situation, and suggest new evidence for judgments for the sake of realistic policies in these areas. The development that has occurred in the higher level of consciousness affects what precedes it: new responsibility or a new conscience necessarily affect the judgments we make, the questions we ask, the data we regard as worthwhile. It also gives us a new self, a more fully self-transcending self, to experience and to care for.

There is another particular direction of 'from above'. This is particularly important in the area of religious education. The self-transcendence of the self is affected by the self-transcendence of the other. Experiencing an authentic self-transcendent other, persons or groups who incarnate the moral goodness that conscience spontaneously recognises, has its effect. The witness of the other shapes and determines our experience in a radical way. It inspires new questions and judgments, leads us to move from self-regarding concerns to a new life of other-directed responsibility. But there is still a higher point. In Christian theology and spirituality this is termed 'grace', the God-given gift, the love of God poured forth in our hearts (Rom 5:5), or, in the language of Ezechiel, it is expressed as a transformation of the heart of stone into the heart of flesh (Ezek 36:26). To the degree this transcendent gift is received and registered, the task of religious education for teacher and student is radically affected. A transcendent source of meaning (the divine Word), a transcendent source of value (the Holy Spirit), a transcendent source and goal for all existence (the infinite mystery of God), indwells and informs our self-transcending consciousness in a radical way. The self in question is most realised in self-surrender to the gift of love, received and consented to; its commands, in biblical language, to the love of God with all one's heart and mind and soul and strength (Mk 12:28–31), and to love of one's neighbour as oneself. Lonergan speaks rather poetically of this gift as that of 'being in love' in an unqualified and unconditional manner, as this love subsumes and penetrates all forms of loving, be they understood in interpersonal, social and even global terms (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 106–7).

Relevance of this Model

I think there is considerable value, then, in suggesting the model of self-transcendence for adult religious education as an open and flexible way of referring to the interpersonal communications involved in the educational process (teacher-student, discussion groups, etc.). It does not presuppose some exalted notion of spirituality, nor does it impose either a metaphysics of soul or person or 'God'. It does however evoke the experiential reality of the subject-in-act, in a manner that respects all the data. Observing the precepts of self-transcendence (be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible) is the condition of progress in any situation, even in the long-term historical cycles of development. On the other hand, not to observe such precepts and to neglect or disallow the interrelated level of consciousness and communication involved inevitably leads to decline. Apart from the negative, large-scale social and cultural consequences, learning, reading and conversation become impossible, which would be a problem if we are concerned with adult development in religious matters.

The model of self-transcendence highlights the need for all concerned to attend to all accessible data. Obviously, this includes the data inherent in a religious tradition which has formed the believer. But it is too easy to overlook the experience of subjectivity, that conscious flow of operations that constitute the human person in

act. The experienced instructor will draw attention to this, and insist on allowing for the full play of questions and meaning that arise. While access to new information (data) may constitute the novelty of the learning situation, the person concerned is not placed at the mercy of an endless array of bright ideas or the uncritical assimilation of inherited beliefs, but invited to make the judgments that need to be made, even if these will need critical refinement before responsible decisions can be taken. These in turn must be appreciated as leading to the development of conscience and a wider appreciation of re-ordering values. Once attention is drawn to the conscious subjectivity of the people involved, contemplation becomes a way of consciously indwelling the social and cultural context in which the religious tradition is being expressed. In short, the task of the religious educator borders on the role of the spiritual director, not perhaps in a religiously specific sense, but at least in assisting the examination of consciousness that is implicit in being an authentically self-transcending person. In this approach, the religious dimension is less an alien intrusion into dynamics of self-transcendence, and more its expansion and fulfilment.

Allied to the rather generalised notion of self-transcendence discussed above is the more specific notion of conversion. Though this has been implied in what been said so far, there are a number of important points if the religious education of adults is to be realistically and sensitively addressed.

Conversion

Religious Conversion

Self-transcendence is not just a generalised dynamic. It is at its most specifically dynamic and far reaching when religious conversion occurs (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 105–107; 241–244). Here, Lonergan is quite lyrical in his expression. He describes religious conversion on the analogy of falling in love. In that blissful instance, the potential for self-transcendence is actualised in a remarkable way. Love for the other becomes the central concern of one's existence, the integrating factor shaping one's interests and care. As mentioned above, it can take the form of interpersonal, social or even global self-dedication. The specifically religious reach of this conversion occurs as a kind of being in love in an unconditional and unqualified manner with what could remain unnamed and unobjectified. It is the Yes of one's whole being to the ultimately significant other, in a manner which resonates in every level of consciousness. It may be dramatic, a 'Damascus experience' as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, or it may result from a gradually growing but persistent undertow pulling the self out of its existential self-enclosure into a limitless realm inhabited by the supremely attractive other who is like nothing in the world. If words can be spoken, it is in the language of praise, adoration, thanksgiving and self-surrender in life and in death. For this incomparable love subsumes all other loves and concerns, supporting, purifying and illuminating them in the limitless

horizon of development that has now opened up. Theology speaks of this experience as a 'state of grace' in contrast to a state of sin, or self-enclosure.

Moral Conversion

While this religious dimension of conversion is what usually attracts the attention of the theologian, the religious educator can be helpfully directed to consider the other modalities of conversion that are implicit in this 'state of grace', for it affects other levels of consciousness, the moral and intellectual, for example, and puts them on a new basis. An ultimate love has profoundly psychological consequences. For this reason, Lonergan makes a point of connecting it with what he terms 'moral conversion' (Lonergan, 1972, p. 240). The experience of the religious profoundly affects the experience of responsibility, the topmost level of consciousness. It is as though the energy deriving from the gift of religious love flows into every domain of our moral responsibilities, inspiring and extending our orientation to the good and to its various values. Clearly, an ethical responsibility exists which makes no claim to depend on religious experience or tradition. On the other hand, the ultimately self-transcending experience of being in love without conditions can invigorate and expand moral attitudes. Religious love places moral values in a new context, and affects the scale of values that the self before its religious conversion assumed as a reasonable order. Here, there can be striking examples of self-sacrifice, care for others, reconciliation and the love of enemies, solidarity with the hopeless, and the patient acceptance of the suffering involved in serving one's neighbour and promoting the common good through peace-making and working for justice.

Intellectual Conversion

Thus the religious form of self-transcendence energises and extends moral responsibility. Something like this is a commonly accepted derivative of religious concern. The love of God is fruitful in the love of one's neighbour, one's enemies and the world itself. But Lonergan allows for another event in the dynamics of conversion. He terms it 'intellectual conversion' (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 238–239). To this degree, a deeply religious orientation affects our feel for objective reality. There is an implicit objectivity inherent in, say, thanking and praising God. The infinite other is acknowledged as the really real, calling into question the idolatrous unreality of human projections. Likewise, the dedication to our neighbour or working for the common good faces us with issues of truth and reality, for the love of one's neighbour does not deal in lies, errors or illusions. Our neighbour, as a real person in a real world, can only be genuinely loved through the promotion of the real good. The religious sense of the real God and the moral sense of the real others united in a common good necessarily presupposes a certain sense of objective reality. It plants the seeds of an 'intellectual conversion'. This is instanced in the readiness to go beyond the limits of empiricism or sense appearances, to deal, not just with lofty ideas or ideals or any number of human projections, but to engage in a critical

manner with what is the case. Lonergan himself, in accord with his deeply philosophical analyses of human knowing, gives a highly technical account of critical realism in all domains of science and scholarship, but his point can be taken here in a more modest fashion. The realism of faith and morality sustains the objective thrust of human intelligence, and is itself nourished by the mind's ability to judge truly, to affirm the objectively real.

I would suggest that there are two practical manifestations of intellectual conversion in the realm of religious education. We can name these, in a way to be explained, as the analogical manner of knowing, and the way of negation, or *via negativa*. The way of analogical knowing assumes a real universal order of being, grounded in an ultimate creative source, in which all beings participate. As the creation of the one God, the universe is intrinsically relational. To that degree, the metaphors and symbols drawn from the immediate world of common sense and consciousness are potentially disclosive of what exceeds our direct experience. What the eye cannot see nor the ear hear or the human heart conceive can be analogically disclosed through what the eye can see, what the ear can hear and what the human imagination can suggest. Hence, the symbols and metaphors drawn from our experience of mountains, deserts, oceans and streams, light and darkness, family, community, society and so on, lead to affirmations of the transcendent other in terms of immensity and radiance, as parent and provider, as friend and lover, as lord, redeemer and saviour. This can be further refined through analogies drawn from the human experience of knowing and loving, making and transforming, of speaking to others and relating to other persons. Hence, we form a religious vocabulary with such terms as the creative Word of God, the Spirit of love, divine creation and providence, and divinely initiated covenant. This analogical type of knowing is, of course, intensified in Christian tradition with its special doctrines of the incarnation of the Word, the sacraments ('visible signs of invisible grace') and the resurrection of the body. Analogical techniques always carry the caution that what is literally affirmed of God in terms of love and goodness, wisdom or power, must also be denied, since no human conception is adequate to the divine mode of being. That must be left in inexpressible otherness transcending any human mind.

And so it is one thing to notice at any stage of religious development that there is a precious positivity in analogical knowing. It is another matter, and more difficult to accept, when all religious knowledge ends in a certain darkness, a 'cloud of unknowing'. If God is like nothing in this world and infinitely exceeds creation, nothing in the world can adequately represent the divine reality. Our knowledge must always proceed by 'the way of negation'. This is a difficult point for the religious educator to handle. In the language of mystics, knowledge must yield to the silent self-surrender of love and hope. On the other hand, this holy darkness is inherent in the biblical tradition. Here we can ponder the transcendent implications of the divine name, possibly best translated as 'I will be who I will be' (Exod 3:14). There is Elijah's discovery that God was not in the earthquake, the wind or the fire, but in 'the sound of sheer silence' (1 Kings 19:11-12). Similarly, the transcendence of God over all human knowing is evident in every page of the New Testament

as well, as, for example, when John, despite the culminating revelation of God in Christ, writes, 'No one has ever seen God' (John 1:18), and when the First Letter to Timothy so strongly states, '[God] dwells in unapproachable light whom no one has ever seen nor can see' (1 Tim 6:16).

It is a challenge for the religious education of the adult to balance a confident positivity in religious knowing with a reverent negativity. When the scales are tipped one way or the other, problems are bound to occur for anyone who has begun to think through the meaning of their faith. When the seeds of intellectual conversion are planted in the religiously converted, there is often an experience, not of more light, but of less, as the mystery comes near in its intimate but inexpressible otherness.

Psychological Conversion

Inherent in the three dimensions of conversion I have mentioned is another, though it is not so explicitly treated by Lonergan, namely, 'psychological conversion'. Again, this could be treated in a highly technical manner, as in the writings of Robert Doran (Doran, 1990, pp. 59–63; 139–176). For our present purposes a comparatively simply point can be made. It is this: with the occurrence of religious conversion, and with its resonances in moral and intellectual consciousness, a new self emerges. Allied to the replacement of 'heart of stone' with 'the heart of flesh' (Ezek 36:26) is Paul's appeal to leave behind 'your old self' and clothe oneself with 'the new self, created according to the likeness of God...' (Eph 4:22–24). There is no question of a new identity, but of a new experience of self. There is a feeling of moving from the consciousness of disoriented rootlessness and meaninglessness characteristic of the 'lost self'. Positively, it leads to an experience of one's self as actualised, 'found', oriented in radical 'state of grace', brought about by a gift and promise of fulfilment beyond the limits of its world. Conversion in this mode offers a new opportunity for self-appropriation. It contrasts with past experiences of meaningless and social conformity, and accords with individuation experienced as a personal vocation or calling. One ceases to be 'religious in general', or a passive participant in a conventionally-understood tradition. The religious subject is not simply living *off* the religious community, but living *for* it, as a responsible creative presence within it. This can lead to the discovery of the self-transcending self in a new intensity, to become the self-in-service, the self conformed to the compassionate will of God. The psychological conversion involved here places the religiously converted person in a world in which the problem of evil remains immense. Still, the emergent self, in its renewed sense of calling, can become an agent of redemption in any situation. Through self-sacrificing love, the person concerned can, as the saying goes, become part of the solution to a desperate situation rather than remain part of the problem (Lonergan, 1972, p. 55).

All of the above might seem to be placing the bar too high for spiritual agility of normal human beings. Nonetheless, such considerations can well figure in the mind of religious educators in their efforts to promote the critical appropriation

of the religious traditions or less structured searchings – especially when adults are in question. If it failed to advert to the multi-dimensional event of conversion, religious education would lack a good deal of vitality and be diminished in its capacity to stimulate reflection on essential issues.

Dimensions of Meaning

The meaning of what the self-transcending self has experienced, understood, reflected on and responded to can be expressed in different dimensions. It will be sufficient for our purposes to note these four dimensions or functions of meaning (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 76–81; Lonergan, 1988, pp. 32–246).

Cognitive Meaning

The most familiar dimension of meaning is the cognitive, intent on objective truth and meaning. I mean something; not this, but that. To the question, ‘Is it so?’, one answers Yes or No. The Christian tradition has been particularly productive of cognitive meaning of its faith, strongly influenced as it was by the classic Greek philosophical turn. Today this cognitive emphasis carries on in the dialogue with sciences and the humanities. But the point is that there is a meaning and a truth inherent in Christian doctrine, an objective thrust toward the real abstracting from all other contexts or considerations. There has been the special domain of theology, above all in its systematic forms. Faith inspires an intellectual quest, in dialogue with science, philosophy and scholarship, the better to give a coherent, objective account of its beliefs.

Constitutive Meaning

Meaning is also constitutive. It informs consciousness, to give the subject a new or increased sense of identity. The constitution of a country informs and shapes the consciousness of its citizens, to give them special rights and obligations. In religious terms, whilst God may be praised and thanked as an objective reality, there is a constitutive meaning in so relating to God: the believer is constituted in a sense of being loved, chosen, healed and forgiven by the Most High. To that degree, any truth objectively affirmed of God ‘indwells’ and informs the mind and heart of the believer, to shape a new and radical sense of God-ward identity. The area of constitutive meaning has been the special domain of what today is commonly called ‘spirituality’, as faith seeks a more experiential self-appropriation.

Communicative Meaning

Thirdly, meaning is communicative. It tends toward community and inspires modes of belonging. It may express a field of shared experience and common understanding and responsibilities. Religiously, the communicative dimension of

faith expresses itself in the community that is embodied in the synagogue, church, mosque or temple. More deeply, it inspires not only a relationship to God, but to all and to everything in God. This dimension comes to expression, especially in the presence of conflicts, when the community's capacity for shared experience and common meanings and values diminishes. In Christian experience, ecumenism and interfaith dialogue most represent the communicative dimension of meaning.

Effective Meaning

Finally, meaning is effective. It builds cities, roads and bridges. It tends to the transformation of one's world, to make it serve human concerns more adequately. On the religious level, this world-forming dimension of meaning is the particular concern of liberation and political theologies. Here faith seeks its adequate political or social structure to express the love of one's neighbour as well as contesting evils of oppression and their supporting structures.

If the tasks of religious education are to be sufficiently addressed, all these dimensions of meaning must be acknowledged: objective truth, personal meaning, community formation and world transformation. There is no implication of a temporal sequence, even though individuals or communities may express their concerns in now one, in now another, of these dimensions of meaning. But it is to everyone's advantage to recognise the inter-related or holographic interweaving of these four dimensions. To concentrate exclusively, say, on objective truth to the detriment of existential or social relevance, would lead to a soulless form of religious thinking. Also, to be so intent on spirituality or community or even liberation as to remove any or all of these concerns from the realm of objective truth cannot but prove disastrous in the end. On the other hand, if anyone involved in religious education is critically alert to the distinction and inter-relatedness of these dimensions of meaning, the capacity of a lucid identification of questions and problems is increased.

Carriers of Meaning

Finally, there is what is termed the 'carriers' of meaning (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 57–73). We began this reflection by examining the source of meaning, namely, the self-transcending subject. We delayed briefly on the various dimensions of meaning. In each case, meaning, especially religious meaning in this context, objectifies, informs, connects and transforms the life-world of the human subject. But meaning is carried or communicated in a number of ways. The identification of these carriers can be a further useful resource in the religious education of adults, especially when such carriers of meaning are at least implicitly recognised in all good educational methodologies. I would list them in the following manner, though, again, I am not suggesting that there is any temporal sequence involved.

Word

The word communicates. We live in a 'worded world'. The word remains the most precise and flexible mode of communication. In the religious sphere, the word is expressed in instruction, formal doctrines, ethical commandments, and in all the theories that seek to clarify the world of religious discourse. This is especially the case in the Judaeo-Christian tradition when the Word of God has such an eminent role.

Community

The religious word is spoken in an intersubjective community setting. A community shares moods and motivations. Ideally, this interpersonal communication is based on shared prayer, worship, hope and compassion. These encompassing moods and motivations give affective weight and momentum to the community's verbal expressions. In short, the word resonates with a fuller meaning in the mood of the community, be it thanksgiving, assurance, repentance or hope.

Symbol

A further depth and compactness to the communication of any given community is found in its basic symbols. Religious symbols of light and life, of healing and relationship and transformation—as say in the Christian sacraments—give affective and imaginative concreteness to religious meaning. Such symbols enter into the gestures and rituals that the community employs in the celebration of its deepest meanings and values.

Art

Allied to the communication actualised in symbols and gestures is art. To speak most generally, art refreshes routine awareness. It brings out some arresting pattern of experience related to the colours, shapes, movements, space and sounds inherent in the way we indwell the world, and thus it is classified as painting, dance, music, sculpture, architecture and so on (Lonergan, 1993, pp. 208–232). Art in this respect has the capacity to re-animate traditional symbols, to make them glow with new life. Religion in all traditions has made long alliances with various forms of artistic expression, and it is these that continue in the secular consciousness even if any appreciation of the religious tradition that inspired them has waned.

Witness

Finally, there is witness or incarnate meaning. Meaning can be so expressed in particular persons or groups that the history of a religious tradition has been radically directed, enriched or even transformed. Hence, there is the Christ ('the Word Incarnate'), the prophet, the martyr, the reformer, the mystic and the saint. Witness

as a vivid carrier of meaning is not irrelevant to religious educators themselves. It is possible that they significantly incarnate religious meaning through their inspired teaching and dedication, and so contribute markedly to the wisdom and expansiveness of the religious tradition in which they operate.

The field of communication, then, is manifold. It is instanced in the words, moods, symbols, art and witness that are invoked in order to 'make sense' of the complex meaning of a religious experience, or of a particular tradition and its associated discourse. The simple listing of these carriers of meaning can suggest ways of adapting programs of religious education to different mentalities, and to point out to those who may be unwittingly restricted to one or other carrier of meaning that there is always a broader, deeper, more refined or articulated field of communication involved. 'Making sense' of religion must involve both teacher and student in the full play of the meaning that constitutes a religious tradition.

Conclusion

Our purpose has been simply to draw attention to a number of helpful terms and categories that occur in the interface between theology and religious education. To that end I have adapted some elements drawn from Lonergan's theological method. While it will be religious educators themselves who may best profit from this outline, I am hoping that religious education programs designed specifically for adults might find it of use. The language here suggested can assist in the critical naming of the religious worlds these adults inhabit, and enhance their capacity to communicate more confidently in the multi-cultural, interfaith situation of our day.

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CHAPLAINCY IN UNIVERSITY: A NEED NOT AN OPTION

Jennie Clifford

Christian Leadership in Education Office (CLEO), Cork

Introduction

As autumn turns the leafy boughs along the university avenue to red and gold and brown, the college campus bursts into new life. The relative quiet of summer recess is dispelled by thousands of students arriving for the new academic year. They congregate in small and large groups as if instinct informs them of the meeting places used by generations of students who have occupied these niches since the foundation. The atmosphere is exuberant as conversation and laughter fill the air. Students queue for identity cards, join guided tours of the campus, and listen to those promoting clubs and societies and to those who wish to attract business. As the days go by, they disperse into the lecture halls, laboratories and libraries and the routine of the academic year takes over. The vast enterprise of acquiring the knowledge and skills for professional life is supported by many services, such as, medical, counselling, career guidance, accommodation and disability services. Chaplaincy, which supports the religious and pastoral needs of students, belongs not on the margins but at the heart of the university enterprise (Norman, 2004). That chaplaincy in university is a need not an option will be argued here on historical, cultural, theological and psychological grounds.

Historical Considerations: Separation of Secular and Religious Education

Chaplaincies did not originate in Paris or Bologna, Oxford or Cambridge in the twelfth century. The services of chaplains would have been considered quite unnecessary in the early universities. Up to the nineteenth century it was taken for granted that education and religion went hand in hand at all stages (McGrath, 1962). This was particularly true of university education, which had its origin within medieval

Western Christianity. The Emperor Charlemagne placed the responsibility not only for the education of the clergy but also that of laymen on the abbots and bishops of the Frankish Empire. The monasteries soon declined the education of laymen while the cathedral schools expanded their staff and curriculum to prepare lay students for the professions (Cobban, 1975). Thus, the universities were direct outgrowths of the cathedral schools and the schools annexed to them (Weiruszowski, 1966). According to Pettit 'The flowering of Catholic intellectual life was embodied in the universities of the twelfth century.' (Pettit, 1973). Religion played an important role in the life of the medieval universities. Universities took responsibility for the moral formation of students and for the provision of facilities for religious worship. Attendance at church and singing in the choir was compulsory (Haskins, 1923). Theology was a recognised faculty within the universities. At the University of Paris it was considered the supreme subject of medieval study, '*Madame la haute science*' (Haskins, 1923).

Even in ancient times learning had a broader scope than the pursuit of knowledge as a preparation for a professional career. Greek education was designed to develop the student's personality and ethical being (Cobban, 1975). Although Roman education had a utilitarian stamp, Quintillion was concerned that education should be a blue print for life, an enlargement of the spirit, producing intellectual and moral excellence (Cobban, 1975). The universities ranked alongside the two great powers by which Christian society was directed, the spiritual (*sacerdotium*) and the temporal (*imperium*). However, the universities claimed a link with the Greek, Gracco-Roman, and Byzantium schools in their struggle to free themselves from undue ecclesiastical and secular control (Cobban, 1975).

The medieval college emerged from the simple conception of a boarding house for poor students as an academic centre where students from a particular region or at specified levels of study might live together in a spirit of harmony and stimulating intellectual exchange. The college was promoted as the model of a Christian community embodying spiritual, moral and academic excellence (Cobban, 1975). In its most mature form the college was an autonomous, self-governing, legal entity, firmly endowed and with its own statutes, privileges and common seal (Cobban, 1975). Where the college and the university fused into a single entity a new institutional form, the university-college, emerged (Cobban, 1975). The socialising experience of residence was thought to be indispensable. Universities were to be communities, where character formation and the personal influence of the teachers were as important as the lecture room (Anderson, 1995). In these circumstances the idea of a separate institution, a chaplaincy, was not considered necessary in university education.

The expectation that the university teacher would be influential in relation to the religious practice and the conduct of the student was reasonable at a time when teacher and student were members of the same religion. After the Reformation this would not necessarily be the case. Since church, state and education were closely associated in the sixteenth century, the Great Schism in the church had a divisive effect on politics and on education (Schachner, 1938). After the

Reformation universities became denominational institutions and were used to promote the religion of the state (McGrath, 1962). Religious tests were undertaken by prospective students and religious observances were required of staff and students. By the eighteenth century universities were opening their doors to students of other denominations while maintaining their own denominational ethos. The issue of the faith and moral formation of these students presented a problem.

Until the nineteenth century the notion of a secular university was unthinkable. Since the middle ages universities had trained priests, lawyers, physicians and civil servants, but the rise in industrial and agrarian capitalism led to a renewed emphasis on professional education (Torstendahl, 1993). High ideals in relation to character formation were expressed in the Rockfish Gap Report of 1818 by Thomas Jefferson, the founder of the first modern university in the United States, the University of Virginia. According to this report the purpose of higher education was not only the provision of professional, industrial and scientific education but 'to develop the reasoning faculties of our youth, enlarge their minds, cultivate their morals, and instil into them the precepts of virtue and order.' (McGrath, 1962). The Report indicated that:

The dormitory accommodation to be provided would be sufficient each for the accommodation of two students only, this provision being deemed advantageous to morals, to order, and to uninterrupted study. Moreover, it is supposed probable, that a building of somewhat more size in the middle of the grounds may be called for in time, in which may be rooms for religious worship, under such impartial regulations as the [members of the Board of] Visitors shall prescribe (Rockfish Gap Report, 1818).

In England, there was a demand for higher education which would be wider in its educational scope and in the constitution of its student body than that offered at Oxford or Cambridge. In a radical departure from the tradition, London University was founded in 1828, as a non-denominational university. Theology was excluded from its curriculum thus avoiding the difficulty of providing suitable religious instruction for a student body of mixed creeds. It was constituted as a non-residential university. Students of different religious denominations were, thus, not required to live together. Its regulation, that the boarding house keepers, whom it recognised, should require their borders to be regular in their attendance at some place of public worship, was abandoned after a year (McGrath, 1962).

The exclusion of theology from the halls of London University provoked an outcry. The opposition of the older universities was deeply rooted in the conviction of the unity of church and state. Sir Henry Newman expressed the view 'that a professedly irreligious institution should not be allowed to distribute titles which had hitherto been recognised as the badge of Christian education.' (McGrath, 1962). The new model would satisfy the longing, not just for higher, but for a different form of education. There would be an end to restrictive religious tests, though the place of religion itself in education remained to be resolved (Murphy, 1995). London University influenced the course of education in many ways during the

nineteenth century particularly in securing public recognition for the principle of the divorce between secular and religious instruction (McGrath, 1962). The separation called for a new institution, that of chaplaincy to university students.

The first stage in the development of chaplaincy was initiated by Catholic university students who established clubs to support their religious beliefs and practices. The first Melvin club was founded at the University of Wisconsin in 1883. Its aim was 'to keep Catholics on campus in touch with their religious heritage.' (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1985). In 1893 the first Newman Club was established at the University of Pennsylvania. It was named after John Henry Cardinal Newman who was later chosen as the patron of campus ministers in the United States. The work of Newman Societies and Centres continues to the present time in many universities.

The second stage of development came from Catholic Church leaders who, recognising the need of students for support and religious instruction, established clubs in universities with their own chaplains and halls of residence. (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1985). In England, the Oxford Catholic Chaplaincy was established by Pope Leo XIII in 1896 to protect the faith and morals of Catholic junior members of the University. The Oxford University Newman Society found a natural home within the Catholic Chaplaincy.

Throughout the twentieth century a variety of chaplaincies and campus ministries for Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist and other religions were established on university campuses throughout the world. For example, at the University of Toronto the following chaplaincies/campus ministries can be found:

Anglican – Trinity College
 Buddhist (Mahayana Tradition)
 Buddhist (Theravada Tradition)
 Christian Reformed/ Graduate Christian Fellowship
 Eastern Catholic
 Ecumenical Chaplaincy
 Hindu Campus Ministry
 Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship
 International Student Ministry (IVCF)
 Jewish/Hillel – Wolfond Centre for Jewish Campus Life
 Lutheran Campus Ministry
 Muslim
 Native – First Nations House
 Pagan (Celtic and Reconstructionist Traditions)
 Pagan (Wiccan)
 Roman Catholic – Newman Centre
 St. Michael's College Catholic Chaplaincy
 Sikh Dharma
 Unitarian Universalist (Toronto University website)

Students avail of the services of chaplaincy on a voluntary basis. Since chaplains, generally, do not have direct access to students, communicating information in relation to the programmes on offer has to be carefully planned. Modern technology has made this task easy. Students can access the chaplaincy programmes on the web and also avail of personal private religious formation which many provide. Thus, through chaplaincy a, religion reaches the heart of the university.

The Ebb and Flow of Religion in the Culture

Universities have been influenced by the ebb and flow of religion in the culture. Bernard Lonergan claims, 'theology used to be defined as the science about God, today I believe it is to be defined as reflection on the significance and value of religion in a culture.' (Lonergan, 1973). In medieval culture 'all reality emanated from and returned to the divine source as in a chain of being. All reality was thus religious,' (Holland, 1987). The integration of religion in the life of the university reflected this culture. The shift to a modern culture of secularisation supported the separation of religious and secular education within the university. Secularisation is 'that process by which many sectors of society and culture are removed from the influence of religious values, institutions and symbols.' (Fogarty, Ryan & Lee, 1984). Throughout the modern era the Western World experienced an ever-deepening secularisation, shutting out the power of religious mystery (Holland, 1987).

The secular world-view may be traced back to The Black Death, which reached Europe in 1347 and had, by 1349, wiped out one third of the population. It was a central traumatic moment in Western history. There were two responses to that moment – one, towards a religious redemption out of the tragic world, the other, towards greater control of the physical world. Thus, two dominant cultural communities were formed: the believing religious community and the secular community with its new scientific knowledge and its industrial power (Berry, 1988).

The secular scientific community with its 'mechanistic' world-view was born of the Scientific Revolution. The *Novum Organum* of Francis Bacon appeared in 1620, the *Principia* of Isaac Newton in 1687, and the *Scienza Nuova* of Giambattista Vico in 1725. The Enlightenment, with its sense of the absolute progress of the human mind, was expressed by Condorcet in 1793 in *Historical Survey of the Progress of the Human Mind*. The doctrines of social development were expressed in the 1848 *Manifesto* of Karl Marx. The discovery that the earth in all its parts, especially its life forms, was in a state of continuous transformation was expressed and explained by Charles Darwin in *Origin of Species* in 1859 (Berry, 1988).

The Enlightenment was inspired by the belief that science would answer all questions and solve all problems. It promised to unleash the light of reason to shatter all residues of superstition and ignorance. It became the intellectual and cultural foundation for the modern world which unleashed technology, politics, economics and culture from every restraint. This modern vision was so powerful that it became

the only way most people could conceive reality (Holland, 1987). The 'liberal story' of cultural and/or biological evolution demanded peoples' rational co-operation and foretold the movement of history towards ever-greater progress. The 'Marxist story' inspired the trust that the contradictions of society would give birth to new, transcendent forms and thus carry history forward towards the classless reconciled society (Baum, 1979). In a thoroughly materialistic and sceptical world, God was declared 'dead'.

It is increasingly being recognised that materialistic positivism, in its objectification of reality, has fragmented and impoverished our experience and alienated us from God, nature, one another and ourselves (Flanagan, 1999).

The modern era has been 'associated not so much with conviction regarding progress as with puzzlement and existential doubt.' (Whelan, 1994). The innate need for religious faith lived on. The works of the twentieth century anthropologists, E.E. Evans-Pritchard and Clifford Geertz led to the appreciation of religion's distinctively human dimension and of the ideas, attitudes, and purposes that inspire it (Pals, 1996). D.L. Pals' comparison of seven theories of religion provides a guide to the understanding of the role of religion in human culture. He concludes:

The age of scientific general theories seems to have passed – perhaps forever. Insofar as they managed to misread or misunderstand the nature of religion in human affairs, it is all to the good that they should now be left behind. They were, and still remain, impressive exhibits of the way in which theoretical inquiry, even in error, serves as a powerful incentive to further exploration and deeper understanding (Pals, 1996).

A cultural shift to a post-modern vision, which is related to the human damage caused by capitalism and state socialism, the oppression of the bureaucratic state, the false trust in modern rationality, and the absence of spirituality, has taken place. The new culture is open to religion (Baum, 1979). The post-modern vision views history as ongoing creation. The new future challenges the present but it remains a future rooted in the past. Dynamic movement continues, not as rejection of the past, but as a deepening of its creative energy. It taps the tradition to break the idolatry of the present and thereby deepen new creation in the future (Holland, 1987). The post-modern era is characterised by uncertainty and radical pluralism. Reactions to it have given rise to fundamentalism and a new conservatism. Its destruction of any hope of shared beliefs and practices is resisted. According to Woods:

One thing is certain: twentieth century men and women have not lost the instinct for religious meaning and purpose, even when institutionalism on the one hand and enthusiasm on the other obscure the traditional paths followed by generations of Christians (Woods, 1996).

Recent research shows that twenty-first century university students are aware of themselves as spiritual people who hold religious beliefs:

The University of California, Los Angeles' Higher Education Research Institute surveyed about 100,000 freshmen at 236 colleges and universities last year and found that 80 percent were interested in spirituality. Seventy-nine percent said they believe in God (Roots, 2005).

According to Alexander W. Astin, co-principal investigator with Helen Astin, 'Two-thirds report they pray, [...]. Their prayers are for loved ones, to express gratitude, for forgiveness and for help in solving problems.' (Roots, 2005).

These statistics point to the need for the provision of religious facilities in universities at the present time. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in relation to the practice of religion requires that this need should be met. 'Everyone has the right either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his [her] religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.' (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). M. P. Gallagher is of the opinion that in the quick sands of post-modernity there is a place for a rock on which to build. What is needed is to find new meeting points for faith, Gospel and culture (Gallagher, 1997). The large variety of chaplaincies and campus ministries in universities at present serve not only mainline religions but also conservative and fundamentalist groups.

On the university campus each particular religion defines itself in distinction from every other. Although people may have different ideas about the universe and about humanity's place in it, they all have some kind of answer to the question of human life and destiny. 'Their rituals and ceremonies may be so diverse as to defy an exhaustive description, but they all nevertheless, have rituals and ceremonies' (Scally, 1997). Each religion develops its own special celebrations – prayers, sacrifices, meals, songs, processions and other gestures – which help people to express and communicate their faith. Religions promote values, found in rules and codes of morality, which prescribe specific ways of living as a faith-filled community. (Pastva, 1986). It is not possible to resolve longstanding differences between religions. 'However, on many campuses, the Catholic community and other religious groups who share a common vision of ministry and who are interested in ecumenical and interfaith cooperation have developed strong working relationships.' (NCCB).

The numerous chaplaincies in a university, such as, the University of Toronto have already been listed. The Mission Statement of the Campus Chaplains indicates that dialogue and cooperation are taking place:

The Campus Chaplains are a multi-faith organisation reflecting the multi-ethnic/ multi-faith complexion of the University of Toronto. They are committed to helping people (students, staff and faculty) to grow to wholeness through a search for meaning in life, an exploration of spiritualities and an examination of moral and ethical issues.

They offer counselling from a holistic perspective. They are available to facilitate rites of passage such as weddings, funerals and memorial services.

The Campus Chaplains are available to assist you. Call them for:

- finding a community on campus
- counselling
- events information
- interest and discussion groups
- worship opportunities on campus (Toronto University website).

The ideal is that eventually secular and religious education be integrated once more in the university. It is desirable that a university communicates a system of values and does not 'withdraw into a value-free domain isolated from genuine tension and conflict' (Lynch, 1989). According to Anthony Bloom, if a system of values is not communicated,

the student gets no intimation that great mysteries might be revealed to him[her], that new and higher motives of action might be discovered within him[her], that a different and more human way of life can be harmoniously constructed by what he[she] is going to learn (Bloom, 1987).

Bloom emphasises the importance in university education of the question concerning the nature of the human person. He argues persuasively for a core curriculum to include the study of religion in the university. Until this happens, a vibrant chaplaincy is a need not an option in the university.

Theological Considerations: Religion as a Human Experience

It is not surprising that so many university students regard themselves as spiritual people. There is much evidence to support the idea that our nature is transcendent and that human beings experience a primordial relationship with mystery – with what is sacred in life. Thus, the experience of God arises from within our nature as human beings in this universe. According to Rahner:

The meaning of all explicit knowledge of God in religion and in metaphysics is intelligible and can really be understood only when all the words we use there point to the unthematic experience of our orientation towards the ineffable mystery (Rahner, 1974).

The search for the meaning of our existence is intimately related to a belief in, or a denial of, the existence of God. Our notion of how we are to live our lives, of what holiness means to us, depends on how we perceive Ultimate Reality.

One of the fundamental theological problems today relates to the possibility of experiencing God in the world. Lane suggests 'that God is co-experienced and co-known through the different experiences and knowledge of the human subject.

God is co-present to us from the outset in all our experiences.’ (Lane, 1981). To develop the argument, Lane reflects on the nature of experience, and of specifically religious experience. He outlines criteria for evaluating the religious dimension within human experience. The context in which revelation is to be understood is that of God’s presence in human experience: ‘Revelation begins in human experience and takes us beyond experience to the deeper divine dimension which we call the mystery of God at the centre of life.’ (Lane, 1981). Faith is the response to this revelation, and is distinguished from beliefs which ‘mediate faith, conceptualise faith and communicate faith.’ (Lane, 1981).

God, then, is not ‘an outsider’. Maurice Blondel, insisted that a ‘message that comes to a [person] wholly from outside, without an inner relationship to his [her] life, must appear to him [her] as irrelevant, unworthy of attention, and unassimilable by the mind.’ (Baum, 1979). Blondel was of the opinion that divine revelation ‘takes place in human life and creates history.’ (Baum, 1979). If people examine their own experiences they discover the truth concerning who they are. Everyone is led by action to discover ‘the impossibility of exhausting the deep willing at the core of his [her] being in a finite universe.’ (Baum, 1979). Here, Blondel is in agreement with Paul Tillich who holds that if people are not able to be involved creatively in reality they will experience ‘emptiness and meaninglessness.’ (Tillich, 1952).

According to B. Flanagan, spiritual experiences are traditionally divided into two main categories – apophatic and kataphatic.

Kataphatic spiritual experience is focused on the sense of God *present* in something external to the person, such as nature, art, ritual or another person or on the content of a person’s consciousness, such as visions or words. Apophatic spiritual experience is characterised by a sense of *absence* of God, rather than presence, and by the sense of the inadequacy of language to convey the mysterious reality encountered (Flanagan, 1999).

Karl Rahner traces the crisis of faith for modern people to the fact that ‘the Christian is all too often taught by rote and externally indoctrinated; consequently he[her] has little idea of what faith means for life as a whole.’ (Wegner, 1980). Rahner concludes then, that it is important for theologians to address man [woman] ‘within the framework of his [her] own experience and mediate faith to him[her] within that framework.’ (Wegner, 1980). It follows that chaplains who minister to students at university need to understand them and their world. According to student, Darin Maurer:

We have a lot of people who feel that college is a chance to be their own person, so they are asking questions that they never asked before [...] They’ve grown up maybe in a Christian culture but they may not be Christians yet themselves. They may be Christians trying to understand if what they felt were answers before were real (Roots, 2005).

It is the role of the chaplain 'to build bridges for these determinedly modern young people to cross into the world of the Scriptures, and to hear the challenge, as well as the tenderness, of Christ for them, without barriers of religiosity and cultural distance.' (O'Dowd, 2003).

There are deep wellsprings of religion and spirituality from which to draw. The twentieth century has seen the revision of every major tendency of Christian spirituality. At Vatican II the Catholic Church returned to the deepest apostolic roots of service and ministry. Protestants were invigorated by the 'Back to the Bible' movement. After the Second World War there was a revival of monasticism in the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches. The ecumenical dimension of monasticism found expression in Roger Schultz's Taizé monastery in France. This monastery continues to attract thousands of young people every year and its spirituality has spread throughout the world. There has been a revival of medieval mysticism, of the Orthodox 'prayer of the heart', and a revitalisation of Ignatian and Celtic spiritualities. Soup kitchens and shelters for the urban homeless give concrete expression to 'the preferential option for the poor'. Asian forms of religious belief and practice found expression in the writings and conferences of Anthony de Mello S.J. 'The search for transcendence itself began to transcend the confines of institutional religion.' (Woods, 1996).

Creation-orientated spiritualities may be meaningful to university students, especially to those in the science faculties. Scientific discovery has created a new opening to mystery. Through the understanding of the infra-atomic world and the entire galactic system the great unity of the universe has become apparent. A shift in consciousness has taken place. The human being was seen as that being in which the universe in its evolutionary dimension became conscious of itself. A new creation story has emerged, equivalent in our times to the creation stories of antiquity. According to this story, the cosmos and every being in the cosmos reflects the divine Being considered by Plato as the Agathon, the Good; by Polonius as the One; by the Christian as God. Secular society, however, does not see the numinous quality or the deeper psychic powers associated with its own story and the believing community is awaking only slowly to this new context of understanding (Berry, 1988).

Creation-orientated spiritualities are displacing the classical anti-creation spiritualities of spatial transcendence and repressive asceticism and the modern anti-creation spiritualities of privatised pietism. Liberation theology is linked to this as the biblical vision of new creation. Thus, the foundation for an ecumenical Christianity is laid. Both Passover and Eucharist recall the past in order to move towards the future. The building of community is the foundation of the creative act. The communion is not simply social (among humans) or religious (with the divine) but also natural (with the ecological matrix). The formation of community, tapping the root, exercising creative imagination – these are the ultimately religious acts which begin to pervade and transform the whole human experience. The god of classical domination fades, as does the modern god of subjective privatisation and autonomous secularisation. What discloses power is the living Mystery revealing itself in ongoing creation and re-creation. The post-modern Christian

vision endeavours to represent post-classical Catholic and post-modern Protestant theological positions in a new and profoundly ecumenical creation. The sense of dynamism and negative judgement is the Protestant legacy; the positive sense of the goodness of the tradition of history is the Catholic legacy. Synthesised, they could represent a new historical stage of Christianity (Holland, 1987).

University chaplains are well positioned to promote a strong ecumenical drive, directed at easing the tensions of the past, positively confronting the issues of the present in order to move towards a harmonious future.

The role of such persons would be not to resolve the tensions around the issues of the day but to offer a vision of a universal culture and to promote the rational discussion to which a university is dedicated. The goal would be to help move the debate, the struggle to define the future, to a common ground. In the university, the inclusion of religious life ought to be included as one of the dimensions of seeking to produce educated men and women (Asbury, 1992).

Psychological Considerations: Crucial Period for Moral and Faith Development

The period of university education is relatively short, mostly three to five years, in a person's life. Although there are many mature students attending university, the vast majority do so between the ages of eighteen and twenty five. This is a period of very rapid change and is a crucial period for moral and faith development. The science of psychology seeks to understand the nature of these developments. Psychology has been 'the explorer who in heroic adventure discovered the un-chartered inner world.' (O'Donoghue, 1997). Religion, which belongs to that inner world, has been subjected to psychological investigation.

The theoretical study of religion from a psychoanalytic perspective has a long history beginning with S. Freud who is regarded as the founder of psychoanalysis. His work on the interpretation of dreams and on religion and civilisation has influenced twentieth century thought and society. Freud espoused the controversial reductionist explanations of religion. According to Freud the inner force and efficacy of religious doctrines lie in the powerful needs all persons have for security and order. He concluded that since religion arises from strong wishes, religion is an illusion (Freud, 1985).

On the other hand, C. Bryant shows that depth psychology can illumine people's experience of God and that faith can enable them to actualise their human potential. The inspiring account of the wealth of the world within, which he provided, can help people to become more human and vibrant in their belief (Bryant, 1987).

C.G. Jung, originally a follower of Freud, developed his own analytic psychology. Jung considered that the drive towards self-realisation is the basic human drive and he includes the collective unconscious in addition to the personal unconscious of Freud. Jung showed that the only way the individual can resist the pressures of

the collective, State or Church, is by relating to God who relativises their power (Jung, 1985).

W. James expresses in psychological terms what the theologians have already said in theological terms. When James speaks of making a proper connection with the higher power, this 'connection' might well be what the theologians call non-reflective awareness or the recognition of the ultimate. According to James, 'one of the duties of the science of religion is to keep religion in connection with the rest of science.' (James, 1985).

A. Ulanov developed more fully Jung's critique of an extrinsic form of religion and relates this to a loss of the symbolic sense. Like Rahner who speaks of the unthematic knowledge of God, both Ulanov and Jung stress that faith transcends the rational (Ulanov, 1985).

H. A. Buetow argues that it is necessary to take account of religion in seeking satisfactory answers to the important questions of life. He examined some modern philosophical systems, Far Eastern religions, Western religions and the social sciences in seeking support for this conclusion. Buetow found that the perspective of the majority of philosophical systems today would argue that the necessity for religion in personal development is slight. However, most followers of established philosophical systems like Realism and Idealism, and modern ones such as theistic Existentialism, argue that religion is essential to optimal personal formation. He also found that Hinduism, Buddhism and the major religions of the West regard the education of values as an essential element in personal formation (Buetow, 1991).

The research of D. H. Heath (1965), W. G. Gr. Perry (1968) and C. A. Parker (1978) has shown that students do develop during their time at university. The university is directly concerned with intellectual growth but since human development is holistic, healthy growth implies a measure of development on all the various dimensions: intellectual, social, ethical and spiritual. The research of T. W. Hall, B. F. Brokaw, K. J. Edwards and P. L. Pike (1998) suggests that the quality of one's relationship with God is highly related to, and may be significantly influenced by one's relational maturity. Religious leaders should expect that people who manifest 'disturbed relationships with other people are likely going to have a more pathological relationship with God.' (Hall, Brokaw, Edwards & Pike, 1998). The ethical/moral and spiritual/faith/religious dimensions of development are therefore relevant to the life of the university student.

The moral and faith development of the person have been the subject of much research in recent decades. L. Kohlberg's research established a six stage theory in relation to moral development while J. Fowler's research established parallel stages in relation to faith development. Other researchers have refined the stage theories and some alternative theories have been proposed.

According to Kohlberg each person is a natural moral philosopher who takes an active role in constructing his/her moral reality. This contradicts those who see all moral values as culturally transmitted and has important implications for all those who claim to teach morality – or those who think that there is such a thing as neutral moral education. In Kohlberg's work, justice is the central issue. It is present in all

stages but in stage six it is the principle of decision. He believed that the highest moral stage is a life lived according to the single ethical principle of justice.

Each stage, as Kohlberg sees development takes place in a social context and, therefore, implies a relationship of the person to his[her] environment – persons, places, objects. [...] The development aspect emerges through a greater differentiation and integration of the demands of justice at each stage (Delaney, 1983).

C. Gilligan suggests that morality really includes two moral orientations; first, the moral of justice as stressed by Piaget and Kohlberg, and second, the ethic of care and responsibility which is central to understanding female moral judgement and action. She conducted a study in which she asked men and women who had graduated from college five years previously the following question: ‘How would you describe yourself?’ Gilligan discovered:

In all the women’s descriptions, identity is defined in a context of relationship and judged by a standard of responsibility and care. Similarly, morality is seen by these women as arising from the experience of connection and conceived as a problem of inclusion rather than one of balancing claims (Gilligan, 1982).

As men describe themselves, involvement with others is tied to a qualification of identity rather than to its realisation. Instead of attachment, individual achievement and success are important for men. Power and achievement are man’s identity, but they leave him at a distance from others who seem to be out of his sight in some sense.

Gilligan considers that women’s morality is different from men’s morality. She claims that these two modes of morality are not opposites. The goal of rights-orientation is justice, which need not be uncaring, and caring which need not be unfair. Justice and caring are complementary.

Development for both sexes would involve an integration of both rights and responsibility through a principled understanding of the complementarity of these male and female views (Conn, 1986).

It has also been observed that women find it easier to move out of the care orientation to a justice orientation when the need arises. Men find it harder to develop the care orientation. They find it easier to stay in the role of justice morality. Moir and Jessel relate:

...there is a life-long male pre-disposition towards problems which can be analysed and compartmentalised, while women are more open to ‘take in’ a problem in all its complexity (Moir & Jessel, 1989).

The challenge is that we ‘become persons who could acknowledge and incorporate difference instead of defensively needing to dominate whatever is defined as ‘other’.’ (Harding, 1987).

It is important for young adults at university to operate at Kohlberg’s post conventional level of moral development. Those who operate at Stage 5, Human

Rights and Social Welfare Morality, do not merely accept the laws which they have always obeyed, but use 'critical (knowing) and free choice.' (Duska & Whelan, 1977). There are, however, objective moral norms which will be taken into account by the mature person in making a decision. In the transition from stage four to stage five 'scepticism replaces certitude, relativism replaces absolutism and egocentricity replaces a previous group identity.' (Duska & Whelan, 1977). This can be a difficult and lonely stage for the individual. It is important that pastoral ministers maintain an understanding attitude until the person begins to move out of isolation to relate positively to others.

Many students entering university at age seventeen or eighteen will exemplify the characteristics of adolescence and will belong to the faith category which Fowler calls Stage 3. Fowler aptly names the faith of the Stage 3 person as Synthetic – Conventional faith. Leaving home can facilitate the transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4; Individuative-Reflective faith. Fowler points out, however, that there is a danger that the clubs or societies which students join may be conventional ideological groups, thus making it difficult for them to develop their own identity and outlook. Likewise, religious groups supported by chaplaincies are open to the possibility of reinforcing a conventionally held and maintained faith system and of causing students to remain dependent on external authority and group identity (Fowler, 1981). 'Anything that looks like artificially prolonging the parent-child model into this brave new world is doomed' (O'Dowd, 2003).

S. Parks closely examines the move between Fowler's Stage 3 and Stage 4 in terms of form of cognition, dependence and community, and she analyses how these three strands of development are gradually woven together in adult faith (Wallworks, 1987). The three strands represent intellectual, affective and social development respectively. There are also, three major themes in Parks' theory: faith, becoming adult, and the environment of higher education. Parks draws on the works of William Cantwell Smith, H. Richard Niebuhr, Richard R. Niebuhr and William Lynch in giving a fresh formulation to the dynamics of faith. She defines faith as 'meaning-making' and links it directly with the imagination, thus helping us appreciate the creative power of imagination in faith (Fowler, 1987). Parks speaks of imagination as the power to 'compose ultimacy, [...] to grasp the whole, [...] to apprehend the transcendent.' (Carmody, 1988). She draws critically upon both psychosocial (Erikson and Keniston) and constructive developmental (Piaget, Fowler, Kegan, Perry, and Gilligan) theories of adult development. In Parks' opinion 'the environment of higher education is an ecology of resources for sponsoring and mentoring persons in the passage to young adulthood' (Fowler, 1987).

Parks identifies four forms or positions within each strand of development. The forms of cognition are *authority bound*, *unqualified relativism*, *commitment to relativism* and *convictional commitment*. The forms of dependence are *dependence*, *counter-dependence*, *inner-dependence* and *inter-dependence*. The forms of community are *conventional community*, *diffuse community*, *self-selected class or group* and *open to 'others'*. Parks looks to the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures for images of these four forms of faith. She finds an example of this in Exodus.

The sojourn in Egypt, the journey through the wilderness, the experience of the Spirit within, and life in the Promised Land aptly describe four such forms of faith. Images of God in the Christian Scriptures do likewise. She also finds in Confucian teaching, in Hindu wisdom, and in Buddhist vision, images which seem to substantiate her arguments (Parks, 1986).

Fowler's six-stage development theory has proved a useful tool for pastoral workers at all levels of education. Science-and-religion courses, such as that taught at Southeast Missouri State University, offer students the opportunity to integrate their worldview, taking both religious ideas and scientific information seriously. The stages of faith development of Fowler are used as a framework for interpreting changes in student viewpoints. Examples from students' writing assignments demonstrate shifts in the cognitive understanding of faith that coincide with Fowler's stages (Gathman & Nesson, 1997).

While there is now a considerable body of empirical data to support the theory of sequential stages of growth, there are other viewpoints. According to J. O'Donoghue, we need to rediscover contradiction as a creative force within us. In contradiction there is light and energy and where there is energy there is life and growth. Hegel recognised this:

Hegel, alone, had the vision, subtlety and hospitality of reflection to acknowledge contradiction as the complex force of growth, which disavows mere linear progress in order to awaken all the aggregate energies of the experience. It is the turbulence of their inner conversation, which brings integrity of transfiguration and not a mere replacement of one image, surface or system by another which so often passes for change (O'Donoghue, 1997).

Fowler agrees that statistical information and research evidence do not reveal the real essence of religion. 'Nevertheless, they tell part of the story and may give us some idea of what is happening, and point out challenges, opportunities and dangers for the future.' (Fowler, 1981)

B. Carmody draws a comparison between Fowler's structural developmental stages and B. Lonergan's attempt to identify the psychological basis of faith. Lonergan presents his account of conversion within the context of transcendental method. In doing so he embodies a normative theological and philosophical stance. His treatment of religious experience, though apparently less pluralistic than Fowler's understanding of 'faith', is more satisfactory from the perspective of faith development (Carmody, 1988). Carmody attempts to indicate heuristically, how Lonergan's transcendental method can be fruitfully combined with Fowler's stages in providing a more holistic approach to the developmental path of faith. Lonergan, unlike Fowler, does not separate structure from content (Carmody, 1988). Lonergan's conversion theory also accounts for the existential moment. Because of Fowler's over-dependence on developmental psychology with its invariant sequence of stages, such existential occurrences are less easy to accommodate (Carmody, 1988).

Whether students experience gradual development over a period of time or sudden moments of inner conversion they will need the support of other students and of experienced chaplains. In her research, T. Dowling found that 'The university chaplaincy provided some students from the sample with a Christian community, friendship and an opportunity for spiritual development' (Dowling, 2000).

Conclusion

It is unlikely in the foreseeable future that all students will receive religious education at university. It may be hoped, however that, through the ministry of chaplaincy, religious education, opportunities for worship and support in moral and faith development will be provided for all students who desire to avail of it. It is also hoped that Chaplaincy will be seen by the university and by religious leaders as a need rather than an option and that personnel, facilities and other supports necessary to fulfil its mission will be provided.

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INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF THE RELIGIOUS, MORAL
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International Handbooks of Religion and Education

VOLUME 1

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The *International Handbooks of Religion and Education* series aims to provide easily accessible, practical, yet scholarly, sources of information about a broad range of topics and issues in religion and education. Each *Handbook* presents the research and professional practice of scholars who are daily engaged in the consideration of these religious dimensions in education. The accessible style and the consistent illumination of theory by practice make the series very valuable to a broad spectrum of users. Its scale and scope bring a substantive contribution to our understanding of the discipline and, in so doing, provide an agenda for the future.

International Handbook of the Religious, Moral and Spiritual Dimensions in Education

Part Two

Edited by

Marian de Souza

Australian Catholic University, Ballarat, Australia

Gloria Durka

Fordham University, New York, USA

Kathleen Engebretson

Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Australia

Robert Jackson

University of Warwick, UK

and

Andrew McGrady

Dublin City University, Ireland



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PREFACE

In today's complex and shrinking world, there has been, particularly in western cultures, an identifiable change in the individual's relationship with religious traditions, and some of these changes have also permeated non-western cultural traditions, as they have been exposed to, and influenced by, western life styles and contexts through developments in communication and technology. This has tended to result in secular and materialistic cultures, where attention in education is focused on the outer life of the individual, and the attainment of knowledge and skills that lead to social status and success. Another outcome has been the increased diversity in culture and religion in societies that were once mono-cultural and mono-religious. While this religious and cultural multiplicity has certainly had a positive impact in the blending of cultural expressions and the growth of inclusive communities, there has also been evidence of the spread of religious chauvinism and intolerance.

Out of this context has emerged a strong and vital interest in human religiosity, spirituality and values, and many are searching for meaning both within and without religious traditions today to seek answers to ethical and moral questions that have been generated by the knowledge and technological explosion. This movement has renewed interest in the lifelong learning aspects of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education. As well, it has generated spirited debate about the nature, purpose and practice of religious education; the place and nature of religious education in secular societies; the relationship between religion and spirituality; the extent to which discussions about religious education can ever be free of ideology; the role of citizenship, ethics and values education, and the application of all of these to global issues.

These are the areas that provide the focus and content of *The International Handbook of the Religious, Moral and Spiritual Dimensions in Education*. They present the research and professional practice of scholars who are engaged daily in the consideration of these aspects of learning and teaching. The result is a collection of essays which are wide ranging, analytical, and scholarly and which reflect contemporary thinking about these dimensions in education, in all of its internationality, as it is today. As well, it proposes new understandings and reflections that point to future directions, which will acknowledge and address these dimensions in education by implementing innovative, exciting and challenging strategies. These essays will be of interest to academics, teachers, students and others who are

interested in the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education throughout the life cycle. In addition, they will inform current research and practice, and will propose guiding principles for future curriculum development in the discipline.

The essays in the first section of the collection deal with the philosophical and theoretical foundations of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education. Ultimately they are concerned with what it means to educate, and the requirement that educators face this question constantly in their work. As Gloria Durka claims in her introductory chapter to this section, theory always underlies educational practice, whether this is conscious or not on the part of the educator. Good education is underpinned by good theory, moreover, theory that is known, critiqued, consciously applied and constantly evaluated. "Teachers who do not understand the models on which their methods are based, are confined to doing what their unexamined habits direct them to do. Thus, they are not the authors of their actions" claims Durka. Section one of this collection proceeds to present a variety of theoretical and philosophical perspectives that may influence teachers' choice of practice. Included in this section are theoretical and philosophical perspectives regarding religious education, perspectives from a feminist point of view, contributions on the significance of spirituality for education and discussions about critical issues that have bearing on the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education.

The second section of the handbook, edited by Robert Jackson, is concerned broadly with issues of religious education and culture. As Jackson says, "the contributions reflect recent debates about the relationship between religion and culture against the background of the wider debate about modernity and postmodernity" and they come mainly from different parts of the western world (including Europe, North America and Australasian), with Turkey and South Africa providing links to the continents of Asia and Africa respectively. In his introductory chapter for the section, Jackson points out the various ways in which the term religious education is used, and reminds the reader to be aware of these differences in reading the essays in the section. With these differences in mind, the reader is taken through a series of essays which traverse postmodernity, religious and cultural pluralism; the relationship between religion and culture; the varying relationships between religious education and values education; methodology in the fields of the study of religious culture and religious education; case studies of religion in public education and religious education for ethnic and religious minorities.

Section Three of the collection, edited by Kath Engebretson, examines "theory about practice" presenting discussion of practical issues, such as choosing and presenting content, developing curricula, engaging students in inquiry through a lens of various theories about how this should be done. As Engebretson points out, this section attends to the questions: "What is this discipline about? What is its nature and purpose?" Engebretson argues in her introductory chapter that confusion about theory within the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education or perhaps, more exactly, confusion about the particular branch of theory to which one adheres, leads to confusion of intention in teaching, to confusion in teaching practice and finally to confused teachers and students. In this section

of the collection, the various branches of theory are presented as a series of sometimes overlapping conversations, which propose certain viewpoints about how the religious, spiritual and moral dimensions of education should be practised. These are categorized as: philosophical, theological and ecclesial conversations; phenomenological conversations; conversations concerning the interface between religious, moral and spiritual education; conversations about the educational nature of religious education and conversations about religious education beyond the school. The categories provide a convenient classification within which to map the field of theory in religious education.

Andrew Mcgrady, the editor of the fourth section, argues that “there is considerable diversity concerning the provision of religious, moral and spiritual education both between countries across the world and within countries themselves”. These essays are concerned with policy regarding the provision of religious, moral and spiritual education in schools and they illustrate the diversity, ranging across the legal, philosophical and theological foundations of policy; the issues that are raised by the use of public space for religious, spiritual and moral education; multi-faith syllabuses for religious education; proposals to introduce ‘objective’ study of religion in countries which prohibit religious education in state schools, and research into the attitudes of religious educators towards issues of gender and equality. This section of the collection illustrates in many ways, and through many cases, the complex relationships that exist between religious, moral and spiritual education and public policy makers; and it provides an informative portrait of this relationship across the world.

The fifth and last section, edited by Marian de Souza reflects the pedagogical aspects of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions in education. Based on scholarship and research, the essays in this section discuss theoretical underpinnings of learning programs that seek to address these dimensions. They highlight the complementarity of the rational, emotional and spiritual elements in the learning process and “offer a variety of learning contexts and practices that have been carefully researched and developed and, in many cases, trialled to successful outcomes”. The content of this final section should provide inspirational and exciting ideas, strategies and resources for scholars and practitioners alike.

Overall, the editors and contributors present this collection of essays as a testament to the educators and scholars who have assisted in bringing the discipline of the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education to its present richness. Inherent in the collection are directions for the future, where the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education may offer strategies for education for hope, peace and justice in an inclusive and unified world.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Dr. Marian de Souza is a Senior Lecturer, student adviser and Acting Editor of the *Journal of Religious Education*. Her research is in contemporary understandings of spirituality, addressing young people's spirituality in education, using an arts-based approach to promote learning across the curriculum, and investigating how ethnic groups in a pluralist society hand on their cultural and spiritual heritage.

Gloria Durka Fordham University, New York, USA.

Kathleen Engebretson, is an Associate Professor in the school of Religious Education at Australian Catholic University. She is a teacher, writer, researcher, curriculum developer and academic in the field of religious education theory and practice. Her research interests include all aspects of religious education curriculum and pedagogy, and in recent years she has conducted research into issues surrounding teenage boys and religious and spiritual education. While working in secondary schools in Melbourne she played a leading role in introducing religious studies courses into the senior secondary curriculum, and has continued to provide leadership and professional development for teachers who teach these courses.

Robert Jackson is Professor of Education and Director of the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick (UK). He has directed a range of externally funded research projects on religious education and religion and childhood. He is currently involved in Council of Europe projects on intercultural education and religious diversity and intercultural citizenship and is leading the Warwick contribution to an EU project on religious education and social cohesion involving 10 European universities. His books include *Religious education: An interpretive approach* (Hodder & Stoughton 1997), *International perspectives on citizenship, education and religious diversity* (RoutledgeFalmer 2003) and *Rethinking religious education and plurality: Issues in diversity and pedagogy* (RoutledgeFalmer 2004). Since 1996 he has been Editor of the *British Journal of Religious Education*. He has a PhD degree from the University of Warwick and in 2006 was awarded the degree of DLitt by the University of Wales for his international research contribution to religious education.

Dr. Andrew G. McGrady is Registrar of the Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University. His teaching and research interests include faith-based schools in multi-cultural societies, the religious, spiritual and moral dimensions of culture and education, education for active citizenship in democratic societies, and the collaborative use of Information and Communications Technology.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Maria da Conceição Azevedo is full professor of Philosophy of Education at the Education and Psychology Department, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Portugal. Her doctorate thesis was on the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa as a contemporary educator and universal master. Her main research interests are Moral and Spiritual Education.

Dr. Linda L. Baratte is Director of the Centre for Theological and Spiritual Development, a lay ministry formation and continuing education program in the Roman Catholic tradition at the College of Saint Elizabeth, Morristown, New Jersey, U. S. A. She is also a member of the Department of Theology at the College.

Joyce Bellous is Associate Professor of Lay Empowerment and Discipleship at McMaster Divinity College, McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. She has taught at the College since 1993. She teaches and researches in the areas of spirituality, ethics, postmodernism and multiculturalism. She is a consultant, speaker and writer for church congregations, seminaries and denominational leaders on the subjects of leadership and ministry education. Her special interest is children and spirituality. She published *Gardening the Heart* (2005), a book of forty devotions on the life of faith and her monograph on spiritual formation titled *Educating Faith* is forthcoming from Clements Publishing (2006).

Inga Belousa is a professor of education and director of a Master's degree Program in Pedagogy at the Faculty of Education and Management, Daugavpils University, Latvia. Her current research addresses issues of philosophy of education, holistic education, and spirituality in education.

Dr. Lucia Berdondini, PhD, Developmental Psychologist, Gestalt Therapist, Research Fellow at the University of Brighton and co-manager of the Working With Others Research and Education Unit. Lucia's research interests are focused on whole school anti-bullying projects (in Italy and UK), implementation of group work skills in pupils of primary and secondary schools, social inclusion, training and support for teachers and teaching assistants.

Sherry H. Blumberg earned both her Master's and her PhD in Jewish education at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. Currently the Education Director at Congregation Am Echod in Lindenhurst, Illinois, she also serves as adjunct professor at both University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee. She was formerly an Associate Professor of Jewish education for 14 years at Hebrew Union College in New York. An innovative Jewish educator for over 36 years, and a co-founder of the Jewish family education movement, she works extensively in the areas of curriculum design, teaching about God and spirituality, informal education, and interreligious dialogue. Dr. Blumberg is listed in *Who's Who in the World* and is a past president of the Religious Education Association of North America. She currently serves as Vice President for Educational Resources of the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education. In Milwaukee, she is a member of the Milwaukee Catholic-Jewish Conference and serves on the board of the Coalition for Jewish Learning.

Michael T. Buchanan is a lecturer in Religious Education at the Australian Catholic University. He has published both nationally and internationally in the field of leadership, management and implementation of curriculum in religious education. His research interests focus on the exploration of factors which impede and assist change in the implementation of curriculum in religious education.

Sandra Carroll lectures in Religious Education at the Strathfield Campus of the Australian Catholic University, Sydney. Her doctoral thesis from San Francisco Theological Seminary was titled 'Teaching about Mary: Professional Development for Religious Educators'. Sandra is married with two teenage sons.

Dr. Eoin G. Cassidy, a priest of the Dublin Archdiocese, is Head of the Department of Philosophy, Mater Dei Institute, Dublin City University. His research interests include: the Philosophy of Friendship, Faith and the challenge of Culture, and Modernity, Post Modernity and Religious identity. His recent publications include: with Leask, I. (Eds.) (2005), *Givenness and God: Question of Jean-Luc Marion*. In the series 'Perspectives in Continental Philosophy', New York: Fordham University Press; (2002), *Measuring Ireland: Discerning Values and Beliefs*, Dublin: Veritas, and, with McGrady, A.G. (Eds.) (2001) *Media and the Marketplace: Ethical Perspectives*, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Dr. Mark Chater is Reader in Education at Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln, UK. He is a religious educator with twenty years' experience in secondary and higher education. His current interests are in spirituality and values in education. He is a member of the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV), book reviews editor of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, and editor (with Cathy Ota) of *Spiritual Education in a Divided World* (Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2006).

David Chidester is professor of religious studies and director of the Institute for comparative religion in South Africa at the University of Cape Town. His publications include *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa*, *Christianity: A Global History*, and *Authentic Fakes: Religion and American Popular Culture*.

Jennie Clifford PhD is a consultant on Religious Education and Faith Formation and the Director of Presentation Global Education Experience. While ministering as a chaplain at University College Cork she carried out an in-depth study of the place of religion in the life of the young adult students.

Maria Helena Gil da Costa teaches at Universidade Católica in the areas of education, creativity and sociology, is a member of the Red Internacional de Motricidad Humana research group, represents The Creative Problem Solving Group, Inc. (Buffalo - USA) in Portugal, and served as principle of a teacher training college for sixteen years. Her current research is in adult education, particularly in the subject of fear and human development.

Dr. Leonie Crotty rsm is Head of Religious Education for the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia. She is a member of the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. Areas of work in her portfolio include the theological and spiritual formation of teachers and leaders in Catholic schools and the provision of curriculum and resources for classroom Religious Education. Leonie's particular interest is leadership in Catholic schools in the context of changing cultural, ecclesial, religious and educational realities.

Sandra Cullen is formerly a teacher of Religious Education and English at Second Level, Sandra Cullen now lectures in Contextual Theology at Mater Dei Institute, Dublin City University. She was Joint Coordinator of the *Logos* Project. She is the author of *Religion and Gender* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005). The focus of her doctoral research is the development of an appropriate model of religious education for those preparing to be religious educators.

Dr. Jorge Diez is the executive director of Hablemos de Cristo, Inc. He has worked for several years as a religious educator in various educational settings, and has vast experience in multicultural religious education with the Latino community in the United States. He has also published materials on the topic of adult religious education for Latinos.

Dr. Veronica (Rose) Duffy csb is the Head of Mission Services/Religious Education at the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Sale, Australia. Her research is in the fields of Theology and Pastoral Ministry. More specifically, her current research is in adolescent spirituality and in religious art.

Dr. Tony Eaude was headteacher of a multi-ethnic Church primary school in Oxford, U.K., for nine years. Having completed a doctorate into how teachers of young children understand spiritual development, he is now freelance consultant, remaining associated as a Research Fellow with the Department of Educational Studies, University of Oxford.

John L. Elias is Professor of Pastoral Studies and Religious Education in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, Fordham University, USA. His recent publications are *Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education* (2005) and *A History of Christian Education* (2002). His present research focuses on early 20th century American Catholic religious educators.

Dr. Graham English teaches in the School of Religious Education at the Australian Catholic University, Strathfield, New South Wales. He has taught in primary and secondary schools and for some years worked in the Catholic Education Office, Sydney, where he provided professional development for teachers in Religious Education, and where he wrote curriculum material as well as policy aimed at the continuing education in religion of teachers in Catholic schools. He has written school texts in religious education, as well as material to support adult religious education. He is also a published cartoonist and illustrator. His research areas and published articles include religious education curriculum, the educational thought of John Dewey, critical theory, the history of religious education in Australia, what it means to be Catholic in Australia, cartooning, and Zen Buddhism. After completing teacher training with the Christian Brothers he has graduated from the Australian National University, the National Pastoral Institute, the University of Lancaster and the University of Sydney.

Clive Erricker is Hampshire County Inspector for Religious Education in the UK and Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Winchester, UK. His research interests are pedagogy in religious and spiritual education and generational issues concerning religious and cultural transmission in the contemporary world. He is co-director of the *Children and Worldviews Project* and joint editor of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*.

Mireille Estivalezes is a historian and sociologist of religions. She has a PhD from the Ecole pratique des hautes études (Paris) on the teaching of religion in the French lay education system. A member of the Sociology of Religion and Laicity Group (EPHE-CNRS), she has published *Les religions dans l'enseignement laïque* (2005) and contributed to the collected work *La laïcité a-t-elle perdu la raison?* (2001).

Anta Filipšone holds a PhD in Religious Education from Fordham University, NY, USA and currently is Lecturer in Systematic and Practical Theology, Faculty of Theology, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia.

Dr. Dorothea Filus is a research fellow at Monash University Japanese Studies Centre in Australia, where she received her PhD in 2000. She specialises in religion and society in contemporary Japan. She lived in Japan for almost six years during which time she studied, worked and conducted extensive research on Japanese religions, social stratification, globalisation and religious education.

Gary Finlay is Director of the National Centre For Religious Studies, an agency of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference. He was Editor/Coordinator for *Understanding Faith*, the religious education programme for Catholic secondary schools in New Zealand. He has been engaged in curriculum development in religious education since 1985.

Dr. G. P. (Joe) Fleming has worked in Religious Education Consultant for over thirty years as teacher, administrator and academic. He has been appointed the Cardinal Basil Hume Visiting Scholar to Cambridge University for the Lenten period of 2006. His academic interests are in the understanding of the nature and purpose of religious education and what this means for religious education curriculum in schools and parishes. In addition, his doctoral and post doctoral interests have focused on leadership in religious education, on issues surrounding appropriate teacher education for religious education teachers, and on the development of classroom religious education materials.

Namulundah Florence teaches at Brooklyn College's (CUNY) School of Education. Her *bell hooks' engaged pedagogy: A transgressive education for critical consciousness* addresses the challenges of cultural pluralism in the United States and Kenya. It received the American Education Research Award (AERA) Critics Awards as well as the Choice Outstanding Academic Title Award. The second book, *From our mothers' hearts: Bukusu folktales* focuses on education within informal settings.

Liam Gearon is reader in education and director of the Centre for research in human rights at Roehampton University (England); and a research associate at St. Thomas University, Canada. His areas of current research are in religion and human rights, and in freedom of expression.

Adrian Gellel is a lecturer in Catechetical and Religious Education at the University of Malta. He is particularly interested in research Divine Pedagogy, Individual Differences, and Adaptive Teaching. He is also actively involved in the planning and preparation of Catechesis and Youth Ministry in the Catholic Archdiocese of Malta.

Aileen Carlin Giannelli PhD counts it a joy and privilege to have been a student of Maria Harris in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at

Fordham University. She holds a doctorate in Church Leadership from Fordham and serves as an adjunct professor in its School of Education.

Peta Goldberg is a senior lecturer in Religious Education in the Faculty of Education at McAuley Campus, Brisbane of Australian Catholic University. Her research interests are in the areas of religious education and the arts and the teaching of world religions.

Bruce Grelle is a professor in the Department of Religious Studies and Director of the Religion and Public Education Resource Centre at California State University, Chico. His areas of teaching and research are comparative religious ethics and religion and public education. Publications include the co-edited *Explorations in global ethics: Comparative religious ethics and interreligious dialogue* (1998).

Dr. Thomas H. Groome received his Doctorate in Religious Education from the joint graduate program of Columbia University Teachers College and Union Theological Seminary, New York in 1975. He also holds an MA in Religious Education from Fordham University and the equivalent of an MDiv from St. Patrick's Seminary, Carlow, Ireland. His books include *Christian Religious Education* (Harper, 1980), *Sharing Faith* (Harper, 1991), *Educating for Life* (Crossroads, 2000), and *What Makes Us Catholic* (Harper, 2002). Tom is a senior Professor of Theology and Religious Education at Boston College and currently serves as Director of BC's Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry.

Tobin Hart is a father, author, teacher, psychologist, and speaker. He serves as Professor of Psychology at the University of West Georgia and is President of the ChildSpirit Institute, a nonprofit educational and research hub exploring and nurturing the spirituality of children and adults (www.childspirit.org). His work examines consciousness, spirituality, and education.

Harold D. Horell is Assistant Professor of Religious Education at the Fordham University Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education. Dr. Horell teaches courses in moral education, social ministry, and the development of children and youth. He has written on Christian moral education and on postmodernity and religious education.

Philip Hughes is the senior research officer at the Christian Research Association (Australia) and a research fellow at Edith Cowan University. His research has focussed on changes in Australian culture and religious faith and, most recently, on the spirituality of youth. Philip is ordained in the Uniting Church in Australia.

John M. Hull is Honorary Professor of Practical Theology in the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education in Birmingham and Emeritus Professor of Religious Education at the University of Birmingham in England. As

well as his BA and BEd from Melbourne, he has an MA from Cambridge and a PhD from Birmingham. He has an hon. D Theol from Frankfurt and an honorary doctorate from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He is the General Secretary of the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values. His current interest is in the theological education of adults. His web site is www.johnmhull.biz.

Anne Hunt, Associate Professor is a lecturer in systematic theology at Australian Catholic University and at Yarra Theological Union (Melbourne) and Rector of the Ballarat Campus of Australian Catholic University. She is the author of a number of articles and books, most recently *The Trinity: Nexus of the Mysteries of Christian Faith* (Orbis, 2005).

Brendan Hyde is a lecturer in religious education at Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, Australia. His research interest is in the spirituality of young children, and in using hermeneutic phenomenology as a framework for reflecting upon children's spirituality.

Dzintra Ilisko, PhD, is a graduate of Fordham University. She is currently a lecturer at Daugavpils University, Latvia, Faculty of Education and Management, Department of Pedagogy. Her interests include: sustainable education, multicultural, adult education, gender studies, value education, and she has published on these topics.

Recep Kaymakcan is associate professor of religious education in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Sakarya, Turkey. His main research interests are in curriculum development and evaluation in religious education, comparative religious education, teaching Christianity in Turkey, values education together with recent empirical research into religiosity and life perspectives among Turkish adolescents.

William K. Kay is an Assemblies of God minister, and Director of the Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies Reader in Practical Theology, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Wales, Bangor. Prior to this appointment he was a Senior Lecturer in the Department for Education and Professional Studies at King's College, London, and before this he was Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Theology and Education, Trinity College, Carmarthen. Before his appointment at Trinity College Carmarthen, William was a lecturer at Mattersey Hall near Doncaster. William's main research areas are Pentecostal and charismatic theology and history, religious education, church schools, religious development, psychology of religion, and Piagetian psychology.

Dr. Ross Keating is a senior lecturer within the Faculty of Education at Australian Catholic University. His research interests include the use of poetry in awakening

students to an experience of consciousness that challenges existing notions of meaning and purpose and as a medium for contemplative expression and insight.

Anthony J. Kelly, CSsR, after serving as Dean of Theology at Australian Catholic University, is now a Professorial Fellow attached to the Institute of Theology, Philosophy and Religious Education. His special concern for an interdisciplinary theology has occasioned numerous publications dealing with theological connections to philosophy, biblical studies, science, psychology, literature and religious education. He was appointed by Pope John Paul II to the thirty-member International Theological Commission.

Paul King lectures in Chaplaincy Studies at the School of Education Studies, Dublin City University. He has also worked as a teacher of religious education, a chaplain and a guidance counsellor in a number second-level schools in Ireland. His current research is on the role of guidance in education.

Dr. Dermot A. Lane, a priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin, is President of Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University. His research interests include Interreligious Dialogue, Christology, and Eschatology. Author of *Keeping Hope Alive: Stirrings in Christian Theology* (1996/2005) and *The Experience of God: An Invitation to do Theology*, revised and expanded edition 2003 and editor of *Catholic Theology Facing the Future: Historical Perspectives* (2003).

Dr. Sally A. Liddy, is a Senior Lecturer, Signadou Campus, Australian Catholic University. Research interests: eco-theology; Christian spirituality; teaching undergraduate religious education and theology; faith formation of young women.

Dr. Anne Looney is Chief Executive of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in the Republic of Ireland. Her research interests include religious and moral education, assessment, and the impact of globalisation on education policies. Her recent publications include Looney, A. (2001) Curriculum as policy: some implications of contemporary policy studies for the analysis of curriculum policy, with particular reference to post-primary curriculum policy in the Republic of Ireland. *The Curriculum Journal* 12(2), 149–162, and Looney, A. (2003), The Pilgrim School: From hedge to hope. In Prendergast N. and Monahan, L. (Eds.), *Reimagining the Catholic School* (pp. 232–245). Dublin: Veritas.

Terence Lovat is professor of education and pro vice-chancellor at The University of Newcastle, Australia. He has taught and researched in religion, ethics and religious education over many years. His recent research interests have been in religious movement, especially with and between mainstream religions (especially Hinduism and Islam) and new religious movements.

Patricia Malone rsj is an Adjunct Professor of Australian Catholic University in the School of Religious Education where she taught full time for more than twenty years. At present she is a member of the leadership team of her religious congregation, the Sisters of St Joseph. Her field of teaching and research is curriculum development and religious education within the Australian context. Pat has played a leadership role in the field of religious education in Australia.

Joseph McCann C.M. PhD is a priest and religious educator. He was Head of Religion in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin, currently teaches management of pastoral and voluntary organisations at All Hallows College, Dublin, and serves as visiting professor at DePaul University, Chicago. His research concerns the management of ethos, the institutionalisation of religion, and Catholic education.

Roseanne McDougall SHCJ, EdD, a sister of the Holy Child Jesus and Assistant Professor of Religion at LaSalle University in Philadelphia, USA, teaches Educational Philosophy to religious and laity during the August Long Vocation in Nigeria. Roseanne holds a doctorate in religion and education from Teachers College Columbia University in New York.

Dr. Wilna A.J. Meijer is Senior Lecturer in the Philosophy of Education in the Department of Theory and History of Education of the University of Groningen, the Netherlands and Visiting Professor in the Philosophy of Education at the University of Gent, Belgium. Her recent research interests include Islam and Education, and Humanities Education.

Siebre Miedema is Hendrik Pierson Professor for Christian Education, Professor of Educational Foundations in, and Dean of, the Faculty of Psychology and Education, and Professor of Religious Education in the Faculty of Theology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Mary Elizabeth Moore is professor of religion and education, and director of women in theology and ministry, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, USA. Her interests centre on education, process and feminist theologies, justice and reconciliation. Writings include *Ministering with the Earth*, *Teaching from the Heart* and *Teaching as a Sacramental Act*.

Gabriel Moran is a professor in the Department of Humanities and the Social Sciences, New York University. He has written on religious education and related topics for over forty years. Among his twenty books are *Religious Education as a Second Language*, *Showing How: The Act of Teaching* and *A Grammar of Responsibility*.

Vivienne Mountain has been involved in education at primary secondary and tertiary levels of teaching in both the secular government sector and in independent schools sponsored by the Christian faith tradition. Her academic qualifications include education, theology, multicultural education, philosophy, religion and student welfare. Vivienne is currently Chaplain at Firbank Grammar, a large independent Girls' school in Melbourne Australia.

Eleanor Nesbitt is reader in religions and education in the Institute of Education, University of Warwick, England. Her research interests include religious identity formation, and Hindu-related movements and values education. Her publications include: *Sikhism: A Very Short Introduction* (2005, OUP) and *Intercultural Education: Ethnographic and Religious Approaches* (2004, Sussex Academic Press).

Karl Ernst Nipkow, born 1928, is an emeritus professor who taught Practical Theology with an emphasis on Christian and religious education at the Protestant Faculty of Theology at the University of Tübingen from 1968–1995. He is also an educationist who taught at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences at the same university. Among his numerous books (also in Russian and Korean) his recent English written publication is *God, Human Nature and Education for Peace. New approaches to Moral and Religious Maturity*. (Aldershot 2003, Ashgate).

Lucinda A. Nolan earned the PhD in Religious Education from Fordham University in 2004. She has taught theology at Lewis University in Illinois and catechetical studies at Santa Clara University in California. She is currently teaching Religious Education and Catechetics at The Catholic University of America.

James Norman is a Lecturer in the School of Education Studies, Dublin City University where he has been central to the development of post-graduate programmes in teacher education, chaplaincy and pastoral care. He is the author of *Ethos and Education in Ireland* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003) and editor of *At The Heart of Education: School Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care* (Dublin: Veritas, 2004).

Dr. Mary Nuttall rsm is a lecturer in the fields of teaching and classroom management, teaching students with special needs and curriculum development. Her research focuses on soulful learning in which creative steps are taken to develop holistic curriculum programs in collaboration with staff and students within primary, secondary and tertiary education contexts.

Sissel Ostberg is associate professor and dean at the Faculty of Education, Oslo University College, Norway. Her research interests are in religious education, religious and ethnic identity, and Muslim children and young people in Norway.

Cathy Ota is Senior Research Fellow at the Education Research Centre at the University of Brighton, UK and co-editor of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*. In September 2004 she established the Working With Others Research and Education Unit with her colleague Lucia Berdondini, at the University of Brighton. The unit works nationally and internationally with pupils, teachers, parents and staff teams, exploring and developing practical strategies to enhance group processes through self-awareness, social communication, peer support, problem solving and conflict resolution. Current research and work is focused on developing effective groupwork in early years and higher education settings.

Fernand Ouellet is full professor at the Faculty of Theology, Ethics and Philosophy in the University of Sherbrooke, Canada. His research interests are the study of religions in schools and intercultural education: in both areas he has published extensively.

The Rev. Mary Petersen is currently Ministry Leader, Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish, Coromandel Peninsula, New Zealand. She also teaches distance education courses that she has developed for Massey and Otago Universities and the Ecumenical Institute of Distance Theological Studies, in *The Teaching of Religious Education, Curriculum Development, Shaping Religious Education, and Ministry with Children and Families*. She was the National Coordinator of Ministry with Children and Families for the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (2001–2004) and General Secretary of the Churches Education Commission (1990–2000). She was a teacher in secondary and primary schools for 12 years between 1970 and 1990.

Sue Phillips is Head of RE and an Advanced skills Teacher at Bognor Regis Community College, a large comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 18 in the Southern England. She is also Professional Tutor overseeing the training of teachers in a variety of subjects and a counsellor. Sue regularly mounts day courses at her school in Theatre of Learning techniques and presents conferences on the techniques throughout the country.

Jack Priestley is Honorary Research Fellow in the University of Exeter School of Education and Lifelong Learning (U.K.). Formerly, he was Principal of Westhill College of Higher Education, Birmingham. He has a lifelong active interest in the history and philosophy of religious education as well as in the practice of teaching.

Dr. Caroline Renehan is a lecturer in the School of Education of the Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University. Her research interests include Marian and feminist theology, and Gender Studies in the context of Initial Teacher Education. Her recent publications include:(2004a) 'Religion and Gender' in *Religious Education Syllabus Leaving Certificate Draft Guidelines*

for Teachers, Dublin, Department of Education and Science, Government Publications Office; (2004b) 'Religion and Gender' in *Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students - Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus*, Dublin: Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Veritas; and (with Monahan, L, 1998) *The Chaplain: A Faith Presence in the School Community*, Dublin: Columba Press.

Graham Rossiter is Professor of Religious and Moral Education at Australian Catholic University in Sydney. He has conducted professional development seminars throughout Australia and in a number of other countries and has published widely. Current interests are: young people's search for meaning and identity, the spiritual and moral influence of film and television, values education. His next book on Religious Education is titled *Reasons for living: Education and young people's search for meaning, identity and spirituality*.

Cornelia Roux is a Professor in Department of Curriculum Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. Her research projects and interests are: Religion Studies: diversity and inclusivity; children's religious development; religion and cultural diversities; human rights and religions and belief and values systems in multicultural societies.

Richard Rymarz is a lecturer in religious education at Australian Catholic University, St. Patrick's Campus, Melbourne. He has longstanding research interests in how religious beliefs and culture are passed on. He has published widely on religious identity and young adults.

Peter Schreiner is educational researcher at the Comenius-Institut, Protestant Centre for Research and Development in Education. He is also President of the Intereuropean Commission on Church and School (ICCS). Research interests in the field of comparative religious education, education and Europe and intercultural education. Information about his publications available through. www.comenius.de

Daniel G. Scott, Assistant Professor and Graduate Advisor, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada focuses his research on the spiritual life experiences of children and youth particularly early adolescent experience, including rites of passage.

Prof. Mualla Selçuk is the Dean of the School of Divinity at Ankara University where she teaches. Her research interests are:

- New Approaches to teaching about and from Islam
- Religious concepts (Children's understanding of)
- Peace Education
- Interreligious Education

Geir Skeie is associate professor at the Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Stavanger, Norway, where he teaches religious studies and religious education. His research interests are theoretical questions related to the philosophy of religious education, with particular emphasis on issues related to modernity, pluralism and identity.

Joanmarie Smith, CSJ, recently retired from the William A. Chryst Chair of Pastoral Theology at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Currently, she is the Director of Spiritual Formation for Local Pastors. Her most recent books are *A Context for Christianity in the 21st century* and *The joy of teaching*.

John Sullivan Liverpool Hope University is a joint Anglican and Catholic liberal arts foundation, ecumenical and inclusive in spirit, with 7000 students. John Sullivan's current research interests include interconnections between theology and education; the nature of a Christian university; the religious thought of Maurice Blondel; how spirituality relates to scholarship.

Dr. David Tacey is Associate Professor in the School of Critical Enquiry, La Trobe University, Melbourne. He teaches courses on spirituality, analytical psychology and literary studies. He is the author of eight books and eighty-five essays, and his most recent book is *The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality*, London and New York: Routledge, 2004.

Ann M. Trousdale is an Associate Professor at Louisiana State University. Her research interests include how children's literature may be used to foster children's spiritual growth and religious understanding, socio-cultural analysis of children's literature, and reader response to literature. She is a Deacon in the United Methodist church.

Anton C. Vrame, PhD is associate Professor of Orthodox Christian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union and Director of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute in Berkeley, California. He is a leading scholar in Orthodox Christian religious education for the Greek Orthodox Church in America.

Dr. Kevin Williams is Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, Mater Dei Institute, Dublin City University, and a former president of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland. Recent publications include *Faith and the Nation: Religion Culture and Schooling in Ireland* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2005). The research for this chapter was supported by a grant from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Jane Erricker Winchester is an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Education, University of Winchester. She teaches science and citizenship and researches children's spirituality with Clive Erricker and Cathy Ota. Together they founded

the International Journal of Children's Spirituality and initiated the annual conferences on Children's Spirituality.

Andrew Wright is senior lecturer in religious and theological education and coordinator of the Centre for Theology, Religion and Culture at King's College, London, England. His research interests are: religious and spiritual education, theological literacy, pedagogy and hermeneutics, critical realism and educational philosophy, theology of education, Christian formation.

T. John Wright retired in 2005 as dean of the College of the Southern Cross, St. John's College, Auckland and as lecturer in theology, University of Auckland.

SECTION FOUR

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION FOUR: EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND THE RELIGIOUS, SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION

Andrew McGrady

Mater Dei Institute, Dublin City University, Ireland

Introduction

Section four of this handbook considers some of the many influences that determine policy towards the provision of religious education in schools worldwide. The chapters are arranged into three parts according to the dominant focus of their authors. Part one considers the legal, philosophical and theological foundations of policy. Part two deals with the increasingly important issue of religious education and the public space. Part three provides a selection of case studies concerning multi-faith syllabuses for religious education, proposals to introduce some form of 'objective' study of religion in countries in which religious education is prohibited in State schools, and research into the attitudes of religious educators towards issues of gender and equality.

Part 1: The Legal, Philosophical and Theological Foundations of Policy

It goes almost without saying that there is considerable diversity concerning the provision of religious, spiritual and moral education both between countries across the world and within countries themselves. This reflects the many different legal and constitutional frameworks that structure educational provision, and the relationship between 'Church' and State, across the globe. (Throughout this section of the Handbook the term 'Church' when used in the phrase 'Church and State' is intended to designate an organised religious grouping of any faith tradition and is not restricted to the Christian Churches.) In chapter fifty nine Peter Schreiner identifies some of these national, regional and international constitutional and legal frameworks. Paying particular attention to the work of the United Nations, Schreiner

begins by examining the various statements of human rights that relate to education and religion and notes the importance of the contribution of religious education in 'education for tolerance' (a theme further explored in part two of this section). He then considers the various structures at regional level (Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia and Africa) and illustrates how, in individual States, the provision of religious education reflects 'denominational' or 'religious studies' approaches or is prohibited in State schools.

The next three chapters take the philosophical as their point of departure. In chapter sixty Eoin Cassidy argues that the basis of authentic education (and of the religious, spiritual and moral dimensions of human development) cannot be found in individualism which is characterised by the 'privatisation of religion, the loss of connection between spirituality and solidarity and the replacement of virtue by subjective preference'. Drawing upon the philosophy of Levinas (which he contrasts with that of Heidegger) and of Buber, he argues that human nature is only truly understood through an anthropology that gives recognition to the manner in which openness to the 'Other' defines each person. In chapter sixty one, Wilna Meijer expresses her concern about the 'ever expanding universe' of the school curriculum as it seeks to accommodate religious education, citizenship education, ethics, and spirituality education and proposes, as an alternative, that the potential of literature and history to reveal the spiritual, moral and religious dimensions of human awakening should be further explored. She bases her argument on Herbart's (1776–1841) notion of the 'aesthetic revelation of the world'. Lastly, in chapter sixty two Kevin Williams approaches the spiritual dimension of education (both secular and religious) by exploring Alexander and McLaughlin's five characteristics of the spiritual (search for meaning, personal dispositions, collectivity, response to wonder, and cultivation of 'inner space') and proposing a sixth, 'absorption' or 'rapt involvement in worthwhile activities'.

The focus now turns to the theological as a source for policy. In chapter sixty three, Dermot A. Lane argues that, from the Roman Catholic perspective, the Second Vatican Council, particularly the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)* and the *Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions (Nostra Aetate)*, contain the seeds for a theology of Religions which can underpin an approach to inter-religious dialogue within religious education. Such a theology of Religions invites an expansion of the religious imagination on the part of Christians to reformulate their theologies of grace, the Spirit, revelation and of Christ in order to encounter the richness of other religious traditions. Complementing Lane's work, and illustrating the educational richness of the religious traditions of humankind, in chapter sixty four, Joseph McCann analyses the basis for education and religious education in the major world faiths other than Christianity. He argues that, because of their different cultures, the different religions highlight distinctive elements of the complex human activity that is religion. Thus Hinduism in its approach to religious education highlights the role of worship or 'cult', Buddhism highlights personal awareness or 'consciousness', the Confucian religion gives prominence to 'culture', Judaism to 'community' and Islam to obedient behaviour

or ‘code’. Although he does not discuss Christianity in detail, McCann suggests that Christian religious education gives prominence to ‘creed’. McCann acknowledges that the other characteristics of religion are often present within the religious education provided by each of the world’s religious traditions but argues that it is the highlighted characteristic that makes the general approach to religious education distinctive. Finally, in chapter sixty five, John Sullivan addresses the ethos of faith schools as a ‘culture within a culture in a changing world’. He highlights the ‘dual identity’ of such schools and their ‘double allegiance (to religious fidelity and to professional standards), calls for attention to be given to both identity and ‘otherness’ so that faith schools are inclusive and explores the relation between such schools and the cultures in which they are located. He notes the debate and controversy about the ‘surrounding apparatus’ of faith schools—initial teacher education, in-service provision, leadership preparation, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and inspection.

Part 2: Religious Education and the Public Space

In chapter sixty six Anne Looney, Chief Executive of Ireland’s National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, ‘maps’ the challenges and contestations concerning religious education when it is situated in the public space rather than the ‘ecclesial’ space. Her mapping is based on three ‘compass points’—the general relationship between religion and education, the emerging consensus about religious education as an ‘educational’ rather than a ‘religious’ project, and debates about teacher identity. She illustrates her discussion by reference to the new State syllabuses for religious education in the Republic of Ireland and concludes that ‘religious education has become too important to leave to the churches’. In chapter sixty seven Siebren Miedema considers the challenge of ‘educating for religious citizenship by exploring religious education as identity formation. He argues that a stringent division of the education system into religiously neutral State schools and denominationally affiliated schools is undesirable. Based on Casanova’s ‘deprivatisation of religion’ thesis he insists that in a global context all schools must prepare pupils for the encounter with ‘religious others’. He illustrates the implications of this for both State and denominational schools (for which he also proposes a typology). In chapter sixty eight Andrew McGrady approaches the same theme of the relationship between religious education and citizenship by considering the ‘expectations’ of the State concerning the religious education of its citizens and the associated responsibilities of religious leaders, and those providing religious education, to enhance human rights. In addressing these concerns he summarises the relevant declarations of the United Nations in recent decades and the consultations and declarations taking place within the regional framework provided by the Council of Europe. Examination of the role of the school in promoting inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue in multi-faith and multi-cultural environments is also considered in chapter sixty nine by Sandra Cullen. She argues that there is a need for society to clearly establish both the responsibilities of the school and the limits of its involvement in such

dialogue, and proposes that the realistic task for the school is the promotion of on-going conversations, emerging from an experience of shared humanity, that are the precursor of subsequent dialogue.

Part 3: Case Studies

Part three of this section opens with two case studies that reflect the introduction of multi-faith syllabuses of religious education. The approach taken to religious education in State schools in England and Wales has been a persistent point of reference to the definition of religious education in multicultural societies worldwide. It is therefore both welcome and appropriate that in chapter seventy Jack Priestley recounts the history and development of Agreed Syllabuses in England and Wales over the sixty-year period from 1944 to 2004. In chapter seventy one Paul King and James Norman evaluate the impact of the new State religious education syllabus in the Republic of Ireland (which shifts the focus to RE away from catechesis) on the work of both the RE teacher and the school chaplain as they balance the formative and informative components of the new syllabus.

The next three chapters provide case studies concerning the introduction of some form of religious education in three countries, France, Japan and Aotearoa/New Zealand, in which religious education has been previously excluded from the curriculum. In chapter seventy two Kevin Williams reflects on religion and educational policy in France where, in State schools, (conceived as a rigorously neutral and secular civic space), any expression of religious commitment is prohibited. He notes that both secularists and believers have expressed dismay at the resultant religious illiteracy and discusses the proposal to introduce the teaching of *le fait religieux* through the treatment of religious themes as they arise across the curriculum, particularly in literature, history and philosophy. In chapter seventy three Dorothea Filius reports on a similar prohibition on religious education in contemporary Japan. She discusses the tensions arising from the current debate about the revision of the 1947 Constitution of Japan and the Fundamental Law of Education (same year), a revision necessary to permit some form of religious education. She voices the fear of many that unless the nature of Shinto as a religion and the relationship between the Emperor and Shinto are first clarified, the reintroduction of religious education may be a narrow, nationalistic and retrograde step. She supports the call for an alternative approach, 'religious culture education' linked to citizenship education. In chapter seventy four we consider the situation of Aotearoa/New Zealand where the 1877 Education Act specified that primary education should be 'free, compulsory and secular'. Mary Petersen notes that this 'secular clause' was intended to avoid denominational rivalry rather than avoid any religious teaching in State schools and describes the 'Nelson System' (a mechanism for providing religious education in State schools, on a voluntary basis outside of the regular timetable) as an example of partnership between the school, parents and the local community. She also describes the development of private faith schools outside of the State system and recent

developments by which schools must agree a 'charter' in dialogue with parents and the local community.

A key objective in educational policy worldwide is that of promoting gender equality and overcoming gender stereotyping. Religious education has a distinctive role in the implementation of such objectives. In chapter seventy five Caroline Rehenan reports on an empirical study with male and female student teachers of religious education in Ireland to identify the occurrence of gender-specific differences in attitude towards pertinent theological issues (as these relate to the manner in which God and Christ are imaged and the implications of such images for gender specific attitudes towards the non-ordination of women within Roman Catholicism). Renehan further explores the readiness of such student teachers to adequately address issues of Religion and Gender within the second level curriculum for religious education.

THE RELIGIOUS, MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION: NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Peter Schreiner

Comenius-Institute, Protestant Centre for Research and Development in Education

Introduction

The important role which education, in partnership with the family, the public school system, religious communities, and the other institutions of society, can and should play in the religious, moral and spiritual development of children and young adults hardly needs emphasising. Whereas international constitutional and legal frameworks provide a kind of general framework in a protective and regulatory sense, especially concerning individual rights and the freedom of religion and belief, each national constitutional and legal framework shapes the education system more precisely and concretely. The right to education is mentioned in several international declarations and treaties as well as the right of parents or legal guardians to decide about the education, and especially the form of religious education, their child should receive. Often while education is compulsory, schooling itself is not, at least in several Western European countries. The interplay between the family, the religious communities, and non-religious belief organisations and the public school system varies according to the value placed upon various layers in the individual country context. Parental rights concerning school education are protected by international human rights conventions. Parents have also the right – as well as religious and other organisations – to establish private schools as an alternative to public schools. However the general right to found private schools under a specific ethos are dealt with differently in different countries. In general one can say that the place of religion in the public forum is contested especially concerning schooling. Nonetheless in many countries it is a fact that the school system in general has deep connections with religion at least in the past.

Thus existing models of education and schooling exhibit a great variety of approaches based on different conceptions of the role of the school concerning the religious, moral and spiritual dimension of education. Where they are part of the general concept of education these dimensions provide a vital underpinning of all aspects of school life, not only in the teaching of concrete curriculum subjects such as religious education, ethics, philosophy or citizenship education, but also in the underlying philosophy of education, in ancillary activities, in the school ethos and in the relationship between the different stakeholders.

International Frameworks

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations)

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, is the seminal document for all other human rights documents. The declaration is not an international treaty; it has no legally binding character for participating States. Rather it is a catalogue of rights containing rights of freedom and protection as well as rights of participation concerning politics, the economy, social issues and culture.

The Universal Declaration begins by affirming that human beings, ‘born free and equal in dignity and rights’, are entitled to human rights ‘without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.’ Among the rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration is the right to freedom of religion:

‘Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice worship and observance’ (Art. 18).

The Universal Declaration also states that parents have the right ‘to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.’ Concerning education generally the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states in Article 26 that:

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Based on the Universal Declaration a number of conventions have been subsequently adopted that have a high legal status – mostly in form of an international committee, an obligation on the part of signatory States to provide regular reports and other mechanisms of monitoring the practice of the agreement. These conventions can be seen as efforts to differentiate and concretise the human right of education by emphasising the basic values of the Universal Declaration concerning ‘the right to education’, the aim of ‘the full development of the human personality’ and parental rights. Frequently they also promote and defend religious freedom and belief. The most important agreements are:

- The ***Convention Against Discrimination in Education***, adopted by the General Conference of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1960. This convention embodies functions similar to those of the 1958 convention in regard to access to education.
- The ***International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the Optional Protocol***. This document underlines ‘the right (of the individual) to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (...) to adopt a religion or belief of his (or her) choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching’ (...) (Art. 18).
- The ***International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)***. This document recognises the liberty of parents ‘to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions’ (Art. 13).
- The ***Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief (1981)*** This Declaration is entirely dedicated to freedom of religion or belief. The text underlines the protection of the child ‘from any form of discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief’. It underlines that the child ‘shall be brought up in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, respect for freedom of religion or belief of others, and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men’ (Art. 5,3). It also underlines the right ‘to education, regarding religion or belief, in accordance with the wishes of his parents’ (Art. 5,2).

In the above documents, freedom of religion is widely recognised as a fundamental human right. It is commonly described as including two aspects: first, the realm of a person’s internal beliefs (*forum internum*), and secondly an external realm, where beliefs are manifested in many forms, such as teaching (*forum externum*). International human rights doctrines usually describe the first aspect as being ‘absolute’, being an area in which governments are prohibited from interfering in any way. In the external realm, however, human rights instruments provide that

under certain specified and narrow circumstances governments may limit external manifestations of religion or belief.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations)

Adopted by the General Assembly of the UN in 1989, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is regarded the most universally accepted human rights instrument in history. It has been ratified by every country in the world except two and therefore uniquely places children centre-stage in the quest for the universal application of human rights. By ratifying this instrument, national governments have committed themselves to protecting and ensuring children's rights and they have agreed to hold themselves accountable for this commitment before the international community.

The formation of the 1989 convention has a long history. The first legal step was taken in 1924 when the League of Nations endorsed the first **Declaration of the Rights of the Child**. In 1948 the General Assembly of the newly formed United Nations adopted a second **Declaration of the Rights of the Child**, a brief, seven-point statement that built on the 1924 Declaration. 'By the present Declaration of the Rights of the Child (...) men and women of all nations, recognising that Mankind owes to the child the best that it has to give, declare and accept it as their duty to meet its obligation in all it respects.' It is interesting to note that the Geneva declaration includes the right of being enabled to develop 'spiritually.' The 1948 Declaration was almost followed immediately by the decision to draft a still more detailed Declaration, resulting just over a decade later in a third **Declaration of the Rights of the Child** by the General Assembly in 1959 (www.unicef.org).

It was only in 1989 that the standards concerning children were brought together in a single legal instrument spelling out in an unequivocal manner the rights to which every child is entitled, regardless of where born, or to whom, and regardless of sex, religion, or social origin. The body of rights enumerated in the Convention is the rights of all children everywhere. Every right spelled out in the final 1989 Convention is inherent to the human dignity and harmonious development of every child. The Convention protects children's rights by setting standards in health care, education and legal, civil and social services. These standards are benchmarks against which progress can be assessed. States that are party to the Convention are obliged to develop and undertake all actions and policies in the light of the best interests of the child.

The 1989 convention emphasises that:

'Education shall aim at developing the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent. Education shall prepare the child for an active adult life in a free society and foster respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, and for the cultural background and values of others.'

It is this stated aim of education of developing the child 'to the fullest extend' that can be linked directly to the religious, moral, and spiritual dimensions of Education.

Tensions can arise between the public educational aim of promoting tolerance and mutual understanding and the rights of the parents to have the last say in the religious and moral education of their children. The Convention has inspired a process of national implementation in all regions of the world (examples at www.unicef.org). The challenge presented can be seen in the fact that three-quarters of the world's entire population of children are not in school despite education being recognised as a right of every child.

Education for Tolerance

In 1994 the *UN Commission on Human Rights* encouraged the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to examine the role of education in the promotion of tolerance of different religious views and traditions. The Special Rapporteur conducted a survey concerning how the curricula for religious education at primary and secondary school levels contribute to the protection of human rights in general, to the protection of freedom of religion or belief, and to a climate of tolerance and non-discrimination in particular (Hera & Martinez de Codes, 2002, p. 35–116). On the basis of these findings an international consultative conference in Madrid in November 2001 focused on the role of schooling in relation to the promotion of tolerance, non-discrimination and freedom of religion or belief. The final Madrid document includes recommendations at the national and international levels. The importance of securing the parents and children's rights and the right to freedom of religion and belief in relation to school education was underlined (Hera & Martinez de Codes, 2002, p. 443–452). While these recommendations do not have a legal status they support initiatives that can influence legal frameworks on national level.

Regional Frameworks

Increasingly international bodies are taking over legislative and political competencies previously vested solely in national States (a good example is the development of the European Union) and their legal frameworks have to be implemented at regional and local level. The above international agreements often set the parameters for regional and national constitutional and legal frameworks.

In 1950 the Members of the Council of Europe agreed the *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*. This recognises the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions. To this was added a number of protocols. *Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (1952) underlines that 'no person shall be denied the right to education' (Art.2).

The right to education is also confirmed in the *Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union* (2000) that may eventually form part of a European Constitution. In the draft text the already mentioned rights are combined with

‘the freedom to found educational establishments with due respect to democratic principles (...) in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of such freedom and right’ (Art. 14, 3).

In summarising the international and regional legal frameworks one can identify four core areas that serve as guidelines for the national level:

1. The right of parents to decide about the provision of the religious education of their children.
2. The public educational aim of promoting tolerance and non-discrimination.
3. The right of the child to education and to the development of its personality to its fullest extent.
4. The right of various groups, including religious bodies, to establish private schools in addition to the public school system.

The aim of developing the child’s personality to its ‘fullest extent’ includes the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions of education along with those other skills and competencies that enable ‘an active life in a free society’.

National Frameworks

National laws must be applied so as to benefit all citizens in accordance with international obligations. Under international law human rights, such as the right to education, may be restricted by Governments by means of, *inter alia*, reservations, declarations of interpretation or specific limitation clauses. Such limitations are only justified if they are prescribed by law and if they serve the purposes of public safety, order, health, morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others (Nowak & Vospernick, 2001, p. 57).

Where education is mentioned in most existing legal frameworks the focus is on the right to education according to the international legislation, the general aim of public schooling and, frequently, on the question of religious education. While national Constitutional frameworks often include general remarks about education, national educational legislation deal more specifically with the objectives and underlying values of education. The precise legal framework at national level depends upon a number of interrelated factors, e.g. the relation between State and religious institutions, the religious demographic landscape, the structure of the education system and the value and perspective of religion in the society. Such factors have also to be situated within an historical context.

Europe

For Europe the current status of national legal frameworks has to be seen against the background of historical developments such as the Reformation (1517–1648), the French revolution (1787–1799), and the political frictions resulting from World War II. In Western Europe generally these historical experiences laid the ground

for the 'religiously neutral State' as the dominant model based upon the notion of human dignity and the specification of human rights. The general European trend is one of the increasing secularisation of society and of an education system that was formerly under the control of the (established State) churches. In the Constitutions of Western European countries freedom of religion and of belief and non-discrimination are guaranteed for all citizens as well as the right to education.

Europe of course does not provide a uniform picture. The significance of religion in society and especially its relevance for national identity differs in Europe. Ireland and Poland are examples of countries where religion still has a central place in society and where a close link between religion and culture exists. This is mirrored in the constitutions of these countries, e.g. in Poland, 'God as the source of truth, justice, goodness and beauty' is mentioned as well as the fact that the Polish culture is 'rooted in the Christian heritage of the Nation and in universal human values'. Other countries can be seen as highly secularised (like Sweden or the Netherlands), and in others a negative image of religion exists e.g. in some central and eastern European countries.

Across Europe there are different solutions to the religious, spiritual and moral dimensions in education. These usually focus on the provision of religious education in 'State' or 'public' schools and on the establishment of private schools. Legal rights for the establishment of private schools exist in most European countries though the size of the private sector varies widely. According to comparative studies (Mackinnon et al., 1997, p. 263), the highest percentage of pupils in private schools can be found in the Netherlands (75%), in Belgium (61%), Spain (31%) and in France (20%). Private schools are based on a specific school ethos, or characteristic spirit, that cares for the religious, spiritual and moral development of the pupils. In such a decentralised school system the right of the parents concerning education is afforded a high value.

Different models exist across Europe concerning the legal basis for religious education. These can be classified as the denominational or confessional approach, the religious studies approach and the prohibition of religious education in public schools approach.

Austria is an example of a *denominational approach* based on legally underpinned cooperation between the State and religious communities. The constitution or school law guarantees the religious communities the right to establish religious education in public schools. Religious education (RE) is taught under the supervision of the State and in general accordance to the national education policy. This approach is considered an expression of the balance between State neutrality and the individual right to freedom of religion. The State does not influence the content of Religious Education as a subject, but remains neutral concerning religions and belief.

The German constitution (from 1949) includes the following provisions:

- a) The entire education system is under the supervision of the State.
- b) The persons entitled to bring up a child have the right to decide whether they shall receive religious instruction.

- c) Religious instruction forms part of the ordinary curriculum in State and municipal schools, excepting secular schools.
- d) Without prejudice to the State's right of supervision, religious instruction is given in accordance with the tenets of the religious communities.
- e) No teacher may be obliged against his will to give religious instruction (Art. 7).

Where RE is denominationally oriented (e.g. in the south of Europe, partly in Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Germany, central and eastern Europe) different kinds of religious education, or alternative subjects like ethics or philosophy, are offered on an equal basis. In Austria, Belgium and partly in Germany denominational religious education is not limited to Catholic or Protestant teaching but it includes also Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and other forms of religious education (Robbers, 2005).

The second European model, the *religious studies approach* (for example to be found in England, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Scotland), does not include the direct participation of religious communities, at least not in a continuous manner, nor do pupils have a general right to opt out, although in some countries this option is given to members of certain religious minorities. The general aim of this approach is to examine religious knowledge and understanding within the context of the diversity of human experience. The neutrality of the State and the right of religious freedom are also guaranteed in this approach, however this occurs in a different way than with denominational religious education. The religious studies approach is carried out under the sole authority of the State. Instruction is not to be neutral in respect to values but must be neutral in respect to worldviews including religion, a demand that reflects the religious neutrality of the State. From this perspective, such neutrality guarantees that the religious education provided is equally acceptable to all denominations and religions.

Taking England and Wales as an example for the religious studies approach, the Education Reform Act (1988) sets education within the context of the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and of society. These dimensions underpin the curriculum and the ethos of the school. They apply not only to Religious Education and collective worship but also to every area of the curriculum and to all aspects of school life. While the Cowper-Temple Clause of the Elementary Education Act of 1870 confirms the non-confessional character of religious education ('No religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught in school') the Education Act (1988) confirms the multi-religious character of RE: 'Any Agreed Syllabus (...) shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (Education Reform Act, 1988, chapter 40, Section 8:3). In other (former) State church systems in Europe (especially Denmark, Sweden and Norway) a development has taken place from a confessional approach to religious education as a multi-religious study approach for all pupils that provides Christian knowledge and religious and ethical education.

France represents a unique model of a strict separation of State and church (*laïcité*), where the State is exclusively responsible for the public school system and no religious or spiritual education exists as an independent subject in school. The public authorities' approach to issues of religion is named *laïcité* [roughly translated as 'secularism']. The concept implies the existence of the public world and the religious world as two independent worlds, radically separate from each other and wholly ignorant of one another. Religious issues are seen as private matters for individuals and families which lie beyond the bounds of public life and thus do not concern the State. The term *laïcité* appears in positive law in the 1946 French Constitution, the preamble of which stipulates that the provision of free and secular public education at all levels is a duty of the State. Article 2 of the 1958 French Constitution declares, 'France is an indivisible, secular, democratic, and social Republic.' Section 2 of the law of 28 March 1882 requires State primary schools to leave free 'one day a week apart from Sunday, so that parents, if they so wish, may give their children religious instruction.' This is confirmed and safeguarded by section 1 of the 'Debré' Law of 31 December 1959 that provides that 'The State shall take all appropriate measures to assure freedom of worship and religious instruction for children in public education.' This has allowed the establishment in France of a robust private school sector that today includes 16% of all pupils. 90% of these institutions are Catholic based, the other 10% are Protestant, Jewish and, occasionally, non-confessional. Such private schools are fully acknowledged by the State according to the Debré Law (1959). Slovenia and Albania are other countries in which no religious education is allowed in public schools.

The United States of America

In the U.S.A. the Religious Liberty Clauses of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution state, 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...' The 'no establishment' and 'free exercise' clauses of the First Amendment provide the constitutional basis for what Thomas Jefferson described as 'a wall of separation between Church & State.' These clauses set the ethical, legal, and pedagogical contexts for any discussion of religious education in the USA. The guarantee of individual freedom is prior to State power. Educational sovereignty rests mainly with the individual States. On this basis no religious education is allowed in a public school. However a special characteristic of the US American school system is the coexistence of private and public schools. At the beginning of American history there was no such clear distinction between public and private schools. Religious content (referring mainly to the faith convictions and moral principles of the Protestant traditions) was part of the curriculum and also shaped the ethos of the school. Subsequently, with the Public Education Movement during the 19th century and the founding of an extensive public school system based on State funds, Religious Education in schools became a political issue. Parallel to the increasing success of the Public Education Movement the constitutional principle of denationalisation of religion

was interpreted in a way that 'sectarian' Religious Education was banned from public schools. During the 20th century there were a number of court judgements that banned all religious expressions from teaching. Today there is a new debate in the USA questioning if such a strict exclusion of a consideration of religion from the public school system is adequate to a situation of globalised and pluralised societies (Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003).

Latin America

Latin America is a diverse region consisting mainly of culturally Roman Catholic countries. Over the past century there have been three significant developments, the spread of the ecumenical spirit within the Catholic Church itself, a dramatic increase in the numbers of, and militancy of, Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches, and the adoption of new or amended constitutions which include guarantees of freedom of religion and which have limited, or ended, the privileged legal status of Roman Catholicism in the region (Sigmund, 2001).

The educational systems and the overall culture of Latin America have moved from the (sometimes contested) dominance of a single religion (Catholicism) to the acceptance and even promotion of religious diversity. 'While much of Latin America had been under military rule from the mid 1960s to the late 1980s, the return of civilian rule provided an opportunity to revise or replace earlier constitutions, including provision on religion' (Sigmund, 2001, p. 56). For a long time instruction in Catholicism had been an integral part of the public school in some of the more Catholic countries such as Columbia and Argentina. In recent years it has been offered on a voluntary basis. Provision has been made in some countries to offer also education in other faith traditions. Also in many countries Catholic schools have largely come to endorse and promote religious freedom and good ecumenical relations. In those cases in which a civic education programme is offered in public schools, the constitutional and legal provisions favouring religious freedom are described and supported. Many Latin American countries also offer voluntary religious education in public schools.

Asia

In many Asian countries the prevailing religious traditions have been used in varying degrees as vehicles for promoting national unity. Indonesia, one of the largest Islamic countries of the world, is known for its unique, interfaith conception of national identity known as the *Pancasila* ideology. According to the Pancasila principles, Indonesian identity is bound together by the five beliefs in 'the One and Only God, just and civilised humanity, the unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by the inner wisdom of deliberations amongst representatives, and the realisation of social justice for all the people of Indonesia' (see the preamble to the Indonesian constitution). 'Enhancement of 'faith and piety' and of 'morals and noble character' are stated as general aims of school education which should apply

to all subjects, together with the recognition of 'local religion and culture' as well as 'the dynamic of global development' (Leirvik, 2002, p. 40). According to the new Bill of Education of 2002, Pancasila education will now be integrated in a revised subject of Civic Education that will also include the study of human rights. A kind of religious education or religiously informed communal education has been encouraged in the State schools of many countries. Efforts have been made to bring together traditional and modern teachings and practices.

Africa

The education systems throughout Africa have been continued into modern era from the colonial times. Pre-colonial education responded to the needs of the community and of the environment. It was integrated with the indigenous situation and highlighted the values, needs and aspirations of pre-colonial society. Subsequently colonial education was designed to make objects of most Africans and has largely succeeded in programming them into conformity to the logic of the colonial system (Fanon, 1986).

The task of post-colonial education is seen as being to 'Africanise' the education system, 'decolonising the mind' (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1994), and developing an integrated type of modern education that serves the needs of African society. This started with the achievement of independence from the 1960s. At the start of that decade, sub-Saharan Africa's primary school gross enrolment ratio (all enrolled primary students, including those under- or over-aged, as a percentage of the primary school age-group) was just 39 per cent. That was far behind Asia's ratio of 67 per cent and Latin America's 73 per cent. By virtually any standard, education in sub-Saharan Africa lags far behind most other developing regions. One obvious reason is that the continent is the world's poorest. Without large and growing economies, governments have a very limited tax base to finance public school systems, while the majority of African families cannot afford the high fees charged by private schools.

Some African countries have taken steps to try to reverse the declines of the previous decades. Overall, public spending on education has increased markedly. This has been facilitated by a revival of economic growth in a number of countries, and by a somewhat greater attention paid by economic policy officials to safeguarding education budgets. As a result, in sub-Saharan Africa, primary school enrolment has increased from 54 per cent in 1990 to 60 per cent in 1998. Benin, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Swaziland, Togo and Uganda have all registered notable improvements in primary school enrolments, some with striking advances in girls' enrolment.

Some of the most innovative work in terms of cooperative curriculum development has been undertaken in post-apartheid South Africa, particularly in the area of educational research and in the formulation of proposals for new curricula aiming at advancing mutual understanding and respect while reducing prejudice, based on a multi-religious models (Chidester, 2001, 2002). This is reflected in the Revised

National Curriculum Statements (2002): 'Religious Education contributes to the wider framework of education by developing in every learner the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary for diverse religions to co-exist in a multi-religious society' (Chidester, 2002, p. 55).

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JOURNEYING TOWARDS THE 'OTHER': A CHALLENGE FOR RELIGIOUS, SPIRITUAL AND MORAL EDUCATION

Dr. Eoin G. Cassidy

Mater Dei Institute, Dublin City University

Introduction

Who could have foreseen as recently as fifty years ago the manner in which in the 'Western world' today religion would be perceived to be a private affair—'between me and God', something that has little place in the larger social and political realm? In terms of our understanding of the nature of religion, both in respect of its truth claims as well as its social character, this is a cultural shift of significant proportions. To illustrate this change in the public perception of religion one could point to the increasing societal acceptance of a separation between Church and State—a core tenet of a liberal culture. At a deeper level, this trend is undoubtedly prompted by a growing societal belief in the importance of, not only tolerating, but also fostering a pluralist ethos in society.

Who could have predicted the explosion of interest in spirituality that is currently evident in the 'Western world'? As any cursory glance at the number of Internet sites devoted to exploring this theme will show, there are an extraordinary number of diverse spiritualities on offer in today's culture. In some manner or form, all of these sites give expression to a yearning for inner healing or a desire among people to be in touch with their inner selves—a longing to be accepted, or indeed to accept oneself. What is it about our culture today that gives rise to this phenomenon? Perhaps, it signifies an impatience with a purely materialist or consumerist horizon of meaning. It may also be a reaction to the increasingly pressurised and competitive nature of today's culture, one that gives people very little opportunity to 'connect' with either themselves or others. Or again, it may signify a rejection of the social/institutional character of religion and a desire to escape to some individual private world that is untouched by the ambiguities of the society in which we live.

Who could have predicted the increasing evidence in 'Western society' of a loss of any sense that one's life can and ought to be evaluated in terms of an objective horizon of meaning, whether described as God or the Good? In a celebrated commentary on contemporary society, Alasdair McIntyre (1981) expressed the viewpoint that the 'Western' culture of today is living in an age that has lost its connection both to the idea of virtue and to the ideal of a virtuous life. In such a cultural milieu, there is a critical loss of any sense of what it is to be a moral person, a situation that, according to McIntyre, has given rise to a cultural acceptance of emotivism. From such a perspective, moral judgments are nothing but expressions of individual preference, attitude and feeling (McIntyre, 1981, p. 14). Over twenty years ago, many would have felt that his views were unduly pessimistic. Whether that is still the case is an open question, but evidence for the existence of a significant emotivist dimension to 'Western' culture is not hard to discern. Taken to the extreme, an individualist culture characterised by unbridled emotivism would signal the demise of any belief in a coherent and ordered world-view that alone will allow for some level of agreement on morality – some consensus on the place and function of human beings in society.

These summary comments suggest that there is a societal movement to disengage from the world, or at least to retreat from any critical assessment of the place of beliefs and values in the world. Whether or not that assessment is accurate, it does highlight the need for those concerned with religious education to engage in cultural analysis. Given the nature and pace of change in the culture of 'Western society', educators have to be attentive to the main themes of the contemporary culture; they must be proficient readers of the signs of the times, otherwise they risk being blind to the way in which the contemporary milieu shapes the manner in which subjects such as religious, spiritual and moral education are either received or understood. It is a task that demands an ability to be sensitive to the cultural presuppositions of students as well as an awareness of the presuppositions that teachers bring to any encounter. The challenge facing all educators is to be able to critique societal presuppositions, while at the same time recognising that there is no neutral vantage point from which to evaluate our own or any other culture.

From the perspective of the short distance travelled in the new Millennium one is reluctant to presume to be able to provide an authoritative assessment on the cultural legacy of the 20th century. Nevertheless, one thing at least is clear: this was a century that celebrated the cultural adoption of an individualist anthropology. Leaving aside the instances of cultural change alluded to above, the widespread acceptance of both the economic and social system that is capitalism, as well as the political system that is liberal democracy, would be unimaginable were it not for the societal presumption that human beings are first and foremost individuals.

The emergence of an individualist ethos is one that raises profound questions for any religion that prioritises the interpersonal character of human nature, a stance that is common to all of the classical monotheistic religions. Judaism defines itself in terms of the covenant relationship between God and his people; Christianity prioritises the commandments of love of God and neighbour, and describes the

Church in communitarian terms as the ‘people of God’ or the ‘body of Christ’; Islam places a premium on social solidarity expressed through the practice of *zakat*, an ideal that proclaims that believers are literally members of the one family. In the self-understanding of these three belief systems, religious belief is not and could never be a private matter between myself as an individual and God. There are no private or solitary Jews, Christians or Muslims; to be a believer of any of these religions is to accept that one is first and foremost a member of a community, and that one’s life is defined in terms of one’s membership of that community.

The contemporary cultural acceptance of an individualist anthropology finds expression in the progressive ‘privatisation’ of religious beliefs and values, the increasing loss of any connection between the interrelated ideas of spirituality and social solidarity, and in the area of morality, the replacement of the ideal of virtue by that of subjective preference. In each of these key dimensions of human existence the emerging individualist culture would seem to have little in common with the beliefs and values enshrined in the classical monotheistic religions. It is the challenge posed by this new cultural reality for religious, spiritual and moral education today that provides the context for this chapter.

The Contours of an Individualist Anthropology

Tolerating Difference: Individualism in a Liberal Perspective

The origins of individualism as a cultural phenomenon are commonly associated with the emergence of a Protestant ethos in the post-reformation period. Nevertheless, the emergence of an explicitly individualist anthropology is very recent; it can hardly be said to have predated the philosophers of the Enlightenment and the first intimations of a liberal culture in the late seventeenth century. In contrast to the whole of classical and medieval culture where the individual was consistently defined in the context of a belief in the social character of human nature, it was liberalism that first celebrated the birth not just of the individual, but also of individualism as an anthropology and as a political doctrine. As anthropology, liberal individualism would adopt the ideals of independence and self-reliance; as political doctrine, liberal individualism would embrace the values of tolerance and the right to equality before the law.

The loss of a shared understanding of values, beliefs and practices that accompanied the break-up of Western Christendom in the Reformation gave rise to the need to establish a liberal system that would at least tolerate difference—a need that was given a particular urgency because of the devastation wrought in Europe by the wars of religion in the seventeenth century. Four centuries later, the distinguishing feature of a liberal culture continues to be a tolerance of individual difference. It is by its very nature anti-authoritarian, and furthermore, its growth has in no small measure led to the acceptance of a democratic and human rights culture that enshrines the values of liberty and equality. Today, we are aware of another positive aspect to this cultural development: an individualist ethos has the potential to create

an ethical environment that espouses an ideal of authenticity, which stresses the importance of self-esteem and personal responsibility.

While recognising the benefits to society brought by the acceptance of an individualist anthropology the legacy is not all on the positive side. From a liberal perspective pluralism is a fact of life, but in this context, a liberal culture may inadvertently encourage the acceptance of a relativist ethos that has little sympathy for either the importance of tradition or the belief in the objectivity of moral values. Taken to extremes, this trend encourages the privatisation of core beliefs and values. This is both to the detriment of any universal truth claims and the progressive loss of engagement with any social context for the practice of these beliefs.

Absolute Freedom: Individualism in an Existentialist Perspective

Another very different societal factor that has undoubtedly contributed to the cultural acceptance of individualism is the ever-increasing development of an urban and transient society with a concomitant loss of a natural community. A world perceived as rootless, anonymous and depersonalised was prefigured in the 'existentialist' writings of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Founded on the ruins of early nineteenth century industrial capitalism, and the slaughter of the trench warfare in the Great War of 1914–1918, it proclaimed the rebirth of a new solitary and heroic individual—a figure of Promethian stature who would challenge the gods of nationalism, capitalism and all other 'isms'. The positive aspect of this philosophical movement lay in its dedication to the struggle against those ideologues who attempted to transform individuals into cannon fodder for some larger cause.

This sensitivity to the creative potential and unlimited freedom of human nature has undoubtedly had an influence on the emerging post-modern sensibility. There are those who would argue that the influence is not without its dangers: that an individualist anthropology shorn of any contact either with a community or with an objective horizon of meaning has the potential to become enclosed in the pretence of a self-made world. In a world of absolute freedom all choices are valid, but paradoxically none is of any value, because there can be no reason for one's choice of one alternative over another other than the mere fact of desiring to so choose. In such a world, where no choice carries any significance, the quest for authenticity risks being trivialised.

In and through its rejection of classical reservoirs of tradition, many would hold that post-modernist cultural developments are lending themselves to the creation of a new youth culture where pluralism is absolute and cultural isolation a fact of life. Undoubtedly, there is a danger that an unqualified acceptance of this facet of post-modernism will lead to an individualist ethos that is marked by the loss of place or history or any sense of cultural memory. It must be remembered that no search for a meaning to life that encompasses the religious, spiritual and moral dimensions of human existence can successfully occur in the absence of a sense of the larger picture within which human identity is constructed – one that includes one's history and the community within which one's earliest formative years were

lived. To deny one's cultural memory is to discard the furniture of one's identity. To be true to oneself is to recognise that my identity as an individual is one that has been sculpted by me—but only out of the material that is the history of my dialogue with significant others, namely my family, community and friends.

Those who would embrace the post-modernist world-view clearly see youth culture in a different and more positive light, as a culture that for the first time can be truly said to be accepting of plurality, novelty, exciting possibility and play. In this scenario, the fleeting and ever changing horizons that mark post-modernity are perceived as embracing an idea of infinite capacity rather than marking the demise of any belief in an ordered and coherent world. Despite the obvious merit in this argument, there is a case to be made that there is a difference between cherishing the playful side of human nature and embracing play as the primary mode of being or belonging. Furthermore, it could be argued that the contemporary preoccupation with play, as reflected in so-called 'Reality TV', may mask something much more serious. Just as indifference or apathy can be a mask that hides a deep-seated anger, so too the contemporary preoccupation with play may be a protective screen that masks a sense of powerlessness—political powerlessness in the face of the global outreach and power of major multi-nationals.

Winners and Losers: Individualism in a Capitalist Perspective

From the standpoint of economic theory, the emergence of an individualist culture is often linked to the rise of capitalism in the industrial revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In fact, many would argue that capitalism, as an indicator of a cultural ethos as well as an economic theory, would never have successfully inserted itself into the cultural fabric of contemporary Western society if there did not already exist the nucleus of an individualist anthropology. Whatever about the merits of the argument, it is undoubtedly true that capitalism is an individualist doctrine, and one that has given a significant impetus to the widespread cultural acceptance of individualism. Again, one is aware of the positive aspects of this cultural development of an individualist ethos, the 'can-do' attitude that is typical of a culture that is shaped by the success of capitalism. In its pragmatic concern with efficiency, capitalism has promoted a confident self-mastery over our environment; it has also contributed to the development of technology that has brought significant benefits to the world.

The individualist and instrumentalist ethos of contemporary society whose contours are set by the capitalist ethos is however not immune to criticism. The societal values of this individualist ethos are those whose parameters are shaped by the exigencies of the market and the world of the market place is one that has little sympathy with ideals associated with the work of community building. Neither is it one that will readily espouse the idea of social solidarity or even the idea of the common good except insofar as it is defined as the sum of individual preferences.

One of the most trenchant critiques of the individualist ethos of a capitalist culture is to be seen in the work of the celebrated American sociologist Robert Bellah (1985)

that explores the significance of individualism on the American psyche. His recent studies have found increasing evidence of the existence of a radical individualism that is shaped by the culture of the marketplace. It is his opinion that this cultural ethos places increasing pressures on individuals to disengage from the larger society. His most controversial viewpoint is that this radical individualism has a 'hard' utilitarian shape and a 'soft' expressive form, the former focusing on the bottom line (economics) and the latter on feelings, which, as he suggests, are often expressed therapeutically. In the course of a carefully argued thesis he suggests that at the end of the twentieth century it is the manager and the therapist that have become the role models for American culture.

The contemporary world of consumer capitalism is one that operates according to the logic of instrumental reasoning, that form of reasoning that acknowledges only one goal that is, effectiveness - 'it is good if it works'. In a managerial society, which embraces the logic of instrumental reasoning, economic effectiveness is the key that opens the door to social mobility and enhanced status. If Bellah is correct, the therapist is also concerned with the instrumental goal of effectiveness. In this case, however, the measure of effectiveness is the criterion of personal satisfaction. Everything in the therapeutic patient/client relationship is subordinated to the furtherance of this goal. As Bellah states with more than a touch of irony:

Its genius is that it enables the individual to think of commitments – from marriage and work to political and religious involvement – as enhancements of the sense of individual well-being rather than as moral imperatives (Bellah, 1985, p. 47).

Many are conscious of the benefits of a therapeutic culture. As Bellah points out, therapeutic relationships provide a kind of training for people to become better communicators - that middle-class Americans today are more 'in touch with their feelings,' better able to express them, and more able to seek what they want in relationships (Bellah, 1985, p. 139). Yet there is a cost—the loss of an understanding of human relationships that transcends the realm of individual needs. Despite the emphasis that many therapists place on the importance of friendships—well-connected persons live longer, healthier lives—a therapeutic culture is radically individualistic. Acknowledging that friendships are necessary for good emotional adjustment does not by itself provide an adequate basis for the possibility of friendship. Bellah's rhetorical question says it all: 'Are friends that one makes in order to improve one's health really friends enough to improve one's health?' (Bellah, 1985, p. 135). One does not have to be an Aristotelian to acknowledge that community based on friendship cannot be conceived as a collection of self-seeking individuals.

Therapy is concerned to assist clients to become well-adjusted persons. That in itself is undoubtedly a most worthy goal. However, in bracketing out of consideration any consideration of the ethical character of human flourishing therapy could never embrace an ideal such as unconditional love or fidelity, virtues which alone will promote a well-adjusted personality. A culture that is too tightly tied to the

extrinsic utilitarian goal of effectiveness, too tightly tied to the methodology of cost-benefit analysis is not one that is capable of transcending the narrow boundaries of self-interest. A therapeutic culture is one that promotes an ethos encouraging friendliness, but it is ultimately at the expense of friendship.

To conclude, the evidence for the influence of instrumental reason on the emerging post-modernist world is not hard to find. Today we talk of the culture of the marketplace. It is a place that can appropriately be described only as a virtual reality populated by the world of advertising and marketing—where the consumer rules and what is real is new. This culture of radical individualism is one in which the contemporary youth culture is at home; one that has embraced novelty—makes purchases and forms relationships with careful attention to ‘sell by’ dates.

Journeying Towards the ‘Other’

This brief analysis of the emerging culture of individualism has revealed a number of different and in some respects conflicting individualist anthropologies. While the more traditional liberal individualism remains conscious of the ties—rights and responsibilities—that bind individuals to the larger society in which they live, this cannot be said to be the case in either of the other two individualist anthropologies surveyed. In the aloneness of absolute freedom reflected in existentialist portrayals of human nature there are no ethical ties that bind one to society simply because there is no such thing as society. In the radical individualist anthropology shaped by the logic of instrumental reasoning of the contemporary capitalist culture there is likewise very little if any ethical ties binding the individual to society, not because there is no society but rather because the logic of instrumental reasoning effectively eschews all but the most minimal ethical world-view.

The focus of this section will be on a critique of the latter two forms of individualism surveyed both of which in their own way effectively eliminate any social context for moral discourse. In the course of this critique, it will be seen that, not only does an individualist anthropology not do justice to the complex character that is human nature, but also that one shaped by the logic of instrumental reasoning likewise fails. I shall argue that human nature is only truly understood in the acceptance of an anthropology that gives recognition to the manner in which the openness to the ‘Other’ defines each person; it also offers the only pathway that that is capable of tracing the contours of religious sensibility. In the course of the argument, I shall draw on the philosophical legacy of two twentieth century Jewish philosophers, namely Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Buber. Although, philosophising from different perspectives and in some cases very different emphases, both nevertheless offer portraits of human nature that are deeply marked by a recognition of the inadequacy of either an individualist or an instrumentalist anthropology. The intellectual rigour of their analyses allied to their shared Jewish faith make possible a true understanding of the challenge facing those charged with religious, spiritual and moral education. I shall conclude the chapter by drawing out the implications of their insights for religious, spiritual and moral education today.

An Openness to the Other: An Individualist Anthropology Critiqued

In many respects, the culture of modernity that shaped the 'Western' consciousness for over three centuries can be characterised by its anthropocentric focus. In its final phase between 1850 and 1975 this turn to the subject took on its most radical form with the emergence of the phenomenological method proposed by the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl. Phenomenology exercised an unrivalled influence on the course of twentieth century philosophy and was characterised by a desire to take as its focus the concrete human experience in all its richness. The strength of phenomenology is that it goes beyond that which is immediately observable and offers a scientific analysis of the shared structures of conscious life that both underlie and give meaning to everyday existence. In the course of the twentieth century the development of phenomenology has provided an unrivalled opportunity to map the complex terrain that contributes to our portrait of human nature. In the light of our concern to explore the adequacy of an individualist anthropology one set of contrasting viewpoints that deserve to be highlighted is that between two of the most famous exponents of phenomenology Martin Heidegger and Emmanuel Levinas.

Born in Messkirch, Germany in 1889, Martin Heidegger was a leading exponent of both phenomenology and existentialism. His phenomenological analysis of human existence (Heidegger 1973) reflects the influence of the turn to existentialism in phenomenology in the period between the two world wars—a shift of emphasis that, among other things, drew attention to the nature and significance of individual freedom. As Heidegger observes, the linguistic derivation of the verb 'to exist' is to stand apart, a stance that emphasises freedom, responsibility and also aloneness. The understandable and yet morally reprehensible reluctance to embrace one's aloneness and to accept personal responsibility for one's life as an individual is responsible for what Heidegger describes as the appeal of the 'they' world – the collective embrace described as the 'they-self' where I can attempt to lose myself and pretend that it is not I but 'they' who are responsible for the shape of my life.

One of the most powerful reflections on the meaning of human existence and indeed, the aloneness of the individual is to be found in the chapter in *Being and Time* devoted to an existential analysis of death. As the title *Being and Time* suggests, life is lived in the shadow of our temporal and historical existence, and in particular, human finitude – the fact that 'as soon as we are born we are old enough to die'. He begins the chapter by acknowledging the difficulty of experiencing or understanding ourselves as a 'whole' because we have not yet reached the end of our lives (Heidegger, 1973, section 46). Not only can we not experience our own death but we cannot even experience the death of others (ibid, section 47). At best we are always just 'there alongside'. However, even though we cannot experience 'Being-at-an-end', we can nevertheless experience ourselves as a 'Being-towards-the-end'. As he says:

Death is a way to be which the human person (*Dasein*) takes over as soon as it is. As soon as one comes to life, he/she is at once old enough to die (Heidegger, 1973, section 49).

The phenomenological analysis of death allows Heidegger to contrast the inauthentic person who attempts to lose himself or herself in the crowd with the authentic person who does not seek to deny his or her aloneness/individuality. The former stance is marked by evasive concealment in the face of death; death is spoken of as a mishap – they die, but right now it has nothing to do with me. In contrast to this attempt at evasiveness, the authentic individual lives in the light of the possibility of death and the recognition that one dies alone. He or she does not brood on death, but rather anticipates it, and thus becomes conscious of the true nature of human existence. This authentic anticipation of death reveals the true character of human existence and in particular its individualist or, as Heidegger puts it, its ‘non-relational’ character—the aloneness of each individual in this world. Just as no one can do my dying for me, likewise, no one can do my living for me.

In proposing that the challenge to anticipate one’s death is nothing less than the call to embrace one’s radical aloneness in the world, Heidegger’s phenomenological analysis of death contains the twentieth century most all embracing and stark philosophical portrayal of the person as an individual. He does not deny the possibility of interpersonal relationships but ultimately they fail to soften the contours of the radically individualist anthropology that is proposed. It was the genius of Heidegger to recognise that one’s stance before death defines the manner in which one lives one’s life. However, the contrast with the phenomenological analysis of death that is put forward by Emmanuel Levinas could not be greater.

Levinas was one of the most prominent philosophers in the phenomenological tradition in the twentieth century. Born in Lithuania (1906) of Jewish parentage, Levinas moved to France at an early age and in the late nineteen twenties he briefly studied under both Husserl and Heidegger. Between 1940 and 1945 Levinas was a prisoner of war in Germany; his status as an officer in the French army being the only thing that saved him from the fate that befell so many of his co-religionists in the concentration camps. The experience of the Holocaust was to leave an indelible mark on his subsequent life. After the war he returned to France where he devoted himself to promoting the thesis that ‘ethics is first philosophy’, where ethics is understood as a relation of infinite responsibility to the other person. It was a stance that he believed would challenge the whole tradition of ‘Western’ philosophy which he argued fails to accept the obligation to respond to the claims of the other because it suppresses the separateness or the transcendence of the other person, a relationship to which I am exposed when confronted by the face of the other.

The face as the symbol of the other is that for which Levinas is most remembered—a phenomenon that draws attention to a universal but little observed feature of human experience. As anyone touched by the appeal of an invalid or a poor person, anyone moved by the impact of a natural disaster on families and communities knows, none of us are immune to the other who pierces me with his/her look. The face that confronts me is not simply reducible to something factual—one fact among many others, but rather that which affects me in a way that calls into question my very being. The face or the appeal of the other is nothing less than the most fundamental experience of human existence, something that challenges

me to respond—a challenge that cannot easily, if at all, be sidestepped. Levinas's writings offer a formidable testimony to the force of this appeal.

Although Levinas acknowledges Heidegger's contribution to phenomenology, nothing so graphically exposes the gulf that separates their philosophies as this reflection on the face—the symbol of an ethical philosophy. In point of fact, Levinas is of the opinion that Heidegger is but the most recent example of the tradition of Western philosophy that has contributed to the marginalisation of the other (Greich, 1987, pp. 64–75; Levinas, 1969, pp. 36–47). Furthermore, in a telling comment on Heidegger's celebrated phenomenological analysis of death he observes:

There is a fundamental difference between my ethical analysis of death and Heidegger's ontological analysis. Whereas for Heidegger, death is my death, for me it is the other's death (Kearney, 1984, p. 62).

For one who had survived the Holocaust, for one who was conscious of the ethical challenge posed by the vulnerability of the 'face', it would never be acceptable to tolerate a reduction of the other to a faceless face in the crowd; the death of the other could never be a matter of indifference. For Levinas the face is 'the other before death ... it is the other who asks me not to let him die alone' (see also 'The Face and the Death of the Other', in *Entre Nous*, p. 144–146). What happens when the other pierces me with his/her look is that I am offered the opportunity to acknowledge that not only am I not simply or even primarily an autonomous subject but that in a real sense I owe my existence to another; I only truly become a human being by responding to the appeal of the one who is other. The irreducible character of the face is a reminder that the other can never be subsumed into my world; it always stands before me demanding a response (Kearney, 1984, p.60).

In contrast to philosophies that focus the quest for authenticity on the individual autonomous subject, the ethical philosophy espoused by Levinas is based upon the primacy of love for the other and the belief that the self cannot survive or find meaning within its own being in the world. Levinas proposes an anthropology that de-centres the subject and acknowledges that meaning is not so much achieved by the subject as received from another. In this he offers a much-needed corrective to the overtly individualist and subject centred philosophies of an existentialist persuasion. As he says, 'I can never escape the fact that the other has demanded a response from me before I affirm my freedom not to respond to his demand' (Kearney, 1984, p. 63).

Undoubtedly, one of the most valuable contributions that Levinas has made to contemporary philosophical debate is to reveal the inadequacies of the radical individualism that were characteristic of twentieth century portraits of human identity, subjectivity and freedom. Through his phenomenological analysis of the manner in which each of us is confronted by the face of another he recognises that one becomes an individual only in and through my relationship to another: 'it is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other that makes me an individual 'I' (Kearney, 1984, p. 62–63).

An Openness to the Other: Levinas and God

There is a strong religious dimension to the philosophy of Levinas and he is one of those credited with being responsible for what has been described as the theological turn in contemporary French phenomenology. As a Jew who had lived through the Holocaust, God could never simply or even primarily be understood as the God of nature or the all-powerful God of creation. As he says:

The God of ethical philosophy is ... the persecuted God of the prophets who is always in relation with men and whose difference from man is never indifference (Kearney, 1984, p. 68).

In acknowledging the importance of this religious influence, particularly in the post-war years Levinas allows himself to be drawn to reflect on contrasting features of the Greek and biblical approaches to meaning and truth. The course of his reflections provides a much-needed corrective to the contemporary 'Western' cultural tendency to privatise religious belief. In Levinas's opinion, Western philosophy and indeed Western culture has inherited a specifically Greek way of thinking, the distinguishing feature of which is the equation of truth with that which can be gathered into a totality—a world created by 'my' concerns. As he sees it, the contrast between this and the ethical or biblical perspective could not be greater. Only in the latter is there a focus on the theme of justice and concern for the other as other and it is only in this setting that God truly has a place. This theme of love carries us far beyond a world created by 'my' concerns. For Levinas, God will never be controlled or tamed by being subsumed into my world. His God is rather the One who is 'other'—who resides perennially on the margins, in a place peopled by dispossessed such as those who knew what it was to suffer in the Holocaust:

God or *alterité* (otherness) and transcendence, can only be understood in terms of that interhuman dimension ... that cuts through and perforates the totality of presence and points towards the absolutely Other (Kearney, 1984, p. 57).

In answer to the question as whether the path to God as the absolutely 'Other' is the path towards the human other, Levinas underlines the ethical demand to be responsible for the other.

'Going towards God' is meaningless unless seen in terms of my primary going towards the other person. I can only go towards God by being ethically concerned by and for the other person (Kearney, 1984, p. 59).

In his portrayal of God as the persecuted God of the prophets Levinas's writings offer some striking parallels with the emergence of Liberation theology in post-war Christian writings. In striking opposition to the emerging cultural movement to privatise religious belief, Liberation theology offered the nominally Christian ethos of Western culture a sharp reminder that the God of the Christian faith is not one who is indifferent to issues surrounding issues of poverty and injustice; the

figure of the crucified God is one that stands in eternal opposition to all attempts to de-politicise the Christian faith. Levinas would be in no doubt that the attempt to privatise religion or to de-politicise religious education does violence to the core tenets of the shared Judaeo-Christian tradition.

An Openness to the Other: An Instrumentalist Anthropology Critiqued

Born in Vienna in 1878, Martin Buber spent over twenty years lecturing in Germany before being forced to leave the country in 1938. He spent the rest of his life in Jerusalem and died in 1965. Although Buber was first and foremost a philosopher in the existentialist tradition, it is arguably for the importance of his contribution to the philosophy of education that he is best remembered today: his advocacy of the instinct for communion which he believed to be in the gift of every child. Spread over half a century, his writings never lost sight of the importance of this insight and were dedicated to showing that it is this openness to the other that defines human beings. It was a life's work that could be summed up in the celebrated phrase: 'In the beginning is the relation' (Buber, 1970, p. 69). His justly celebrated publication entitled *I and Thou*, first published in 1923, is a lengthy series of meditations on this instinct for communion that he describes under the rubric of the 'I-You' relationship. In the course of this book Buber was led to reflect not only on the interpersonal character of human nature but more particularly on the difficulty of sustaining that openness to the other (I-You relationship) in the face of the need to stand back and engage in what might be described as an exercise in cost benefit analysis—an 'I-It' relationship, one that assesses the present in terms of past experience and future prospects. As he says:

One cannot live in the pure present: it would consume us if care were not taken that it is overcome quickly and thoroughly. But in pure past one can live; in fact, only there can a life be arranged. One only has to fill every moment with experiencing and using, and it ceases to burn (Buber, 1970, p. 85).

Nevertheless, as the closing phrase makes clear, he views with alarm the temptation to settle for a life that is situated exclusively within the parameters of instrumental reasoning – an 'I-It' framework. In the paragraph that concludes part one of the book one is left in no doubt about the seriousness with which he treats this issue.

And in all the seriousness of truth, listen: without 'It' a human being cannot live. But whoever lives only with that is not human (Buber, 1970, p. 85).

There are few phrases that can match that just quoted in providing a more insightful summary of Buber's life work—a life dedicated to reminding society of the dangers of living solely within the parameters of instrumental reasoning which reduces everything including persons to the status of objects in a world that contains only objects. For someone that was forced to flee Germany in 1938 in the face of the attempts to de-humanise large sections of the population his concern is hardly surprising.

An Openness to the Other: Buber and God

One of the most thought provoking aspects of Buber's reflections on the 'I-You' relationship is the manner in which he extends this metaphor to encompass the possibility of contact between humans and God in what he describes as an 'I-eternal You' relationship. For anyone interested in exploring the appropriate location for religious education this final section of *I and Thou* merits study. In a beautiful meditation that opens the final section of *I and Thou* Buber expresses this insight as follows:

Extended, the lines of relationships intersect in the eternal You. Every single You is a glimpse of that. Through every single You the basic word addresses the eternal You. . . . Men have addressed their eternal You by many names. When they sang of what they had thus named, they still meant You: The first myths were hymns of praise. Then the names entered into the It-language; men felt impelled more and more to think of and to talk about their eternal You as an It. But all names of God remain hallowed – because they have been used not only to speak *of* God but also to speak *to* him (Buber, 1970, p. 123).

Religion and indeed religious education celebrates the encounter between the world of the human and the divine and, if Buber is correct, its focus ought not primarily to be on the question as to our knowledge of God but rather on the challenge of exploring the contours of our relationship with God. Buber was in no doubt that religious education is not something that can be taught if one means by this, something to be found, discovered, achieved, possessed or accomplished. Rather religious education is inseparable from the discovery that one is sought, claimed, called, and addressed. Above all, he would always insist that it is not possible to have an 'I-It' relationship with God; the only locus for the meeting of the human and the divine is in an 'I-You' loving relationship, one which gives birth to communion and community:

What has to be given up is not the I but that false drive for self-affirmation which impels man to flee from the unreliable, unsolid, unlasting, unpredictable, dangerous world of relation into the having of things (Buber, 1970, p. 126).

From Buber's perspective, the only appropriate locus for religious education lies in exploring the openness to the other that both defines human nature and gives it meaning. Whereas a dialogue between religion and science may provide a credible foundation for the belief in an ordered universe, nevertheless religion and religious education are not about problem solving and such a dialogue can never give us access to God who can only be encountered through the grace filled relationship that is signified by 'I-You'. As he says:

It is not as if God could be inferred from anything—say, from nature as its cause, or from history as its helmsman, or perhaps from the subject as the self that thinks itself through it. It is not as if something else were 'given'

and this were then deduced from it. This is what confronts us immediately and first and always, and legitimately it can only be addressed, not asserted (Buber, 1970, p. 129).

In essence the encounter with God is a finding without seeking—a grace filled relationship that gives recognition to an insight shared by both Judaism and Christianity, namely, that we are able to seek God only because he sought us first. The relationship is one that finds its location in the dialectic between presence and absence. In Buber's sober assessment of our inability to sustain an 'I-You' relationship he acknowledges the inevitability of what might be described as 'the dark night of the soul'. As he puts it:

To be sure, whoever knows God also knows God's remoteness and the agony of drought upon a frightened heart, but not the loss of presence. Only we are not always there (Buber, 1970, p. 147).

If the manner in which the increasing dominance of instrumental reasoning destroys the possibility of any relationship with God lies at the heart of Buber's meditations that are contained in *I and Thou* it is not his only concern. As the above quotation suggests, his exploration of the manner in which the openness to the other both provides for the possibility of religion and shapes the contours of religious faith is truly prescient and if studied has the potential to make a real contribution to our understanding of religious education.

Journeying Towards the Other: Religious, Spiritual and Moral Education

For those concerned with religious, spiritual and moral education the implications of the critique of individualism offered by both Buber and Levinas are unambiguous. From the perspectives of both religious and spiritual education they challenge much of the received wisdom of the present age, namely that the locus for both religion and spirituality is the private individual. As outlined above, the Judaic religion would be altered beyond recognition if the social and indeed political character of its truth claims were to be denied. As even a cursory glance at the Beatitudes reveals, this is a perspective that is not confined to the Judaic tradition.

In the context of the challenge that faces those concerned with spiritual education, the anthropologies of both Buber and Levinas raise fundamental questions regarding the adequacy of conceiving spirituality as some sort of private retreat into a self-enclosed world of meditation and contemplation. Similarly, anyone conversant with Christianity would be in no doubt but that the meditative or contemplative life can neither be conceived as a form of rejection of the world or escapism from the world. In this context, one is reminded of the Roman Catholic designation of Therese of Lisieux, someone who spent the whole of her short adult life in silent contemplation, as patron of the missions.

From a Christian perspective, the only authentic spirituality is one that has its roots in love. A father who looks lovingly on his child, a daughter who cares

lovingly for her infirm mother, those people who gives time to care for the homeless or to work for justice in the world, these are spiritual people. From the perspective of a religion such as Christianity one only becomes a spiritual person, someone who is in touch with oneself, to the extent that one is in touch with another. The yearning for spirituality in today's culture suggests a desire to connect with oneself. However, the insights of the shared perspective of the Judaeo-Christian tradition suggest that one should be careful not to confuse inwardness with introspectiveness. If their insights are correct, it is only in listening to another that one finds the key that will unlock the door to either one's own heart or to the presence of God in one's life, someone who, as Augustine never tired of preaching, is closer to me than I am to myself. Book Ten of the *Confessions* of St Augustine is a lengthy meditation on this theme; see in particular *Confessions*, 10.27.

If the critiques of individualism provided by both Buber and Levinas are accurate the advent of a radical individualism marked by a loss of any objective theory of the Good and the increasing dominance of instrumental reasoning renders problematical not just the task of religious and spiritual education but also of moral education. In the last analysis, it destroys the whole basis for ethical discourse because it is premised on the belief that there is no alternative to self-interested relationships that are defined on the basis of either pleasure or utility. While not disputing the importance of both pleasure and utility in judging the value of an action, neither of them, singly or together, provides an adequate foundation for ethical behaviour. As any adult could testify, the practice of virtues such as truthfulness, fairness or a respect for the privacy of the individual could hardly be justified solely on the basis of either pleasure or utility. The practice of these virtues is neither guaranteed to facilitate the pursuit of fame or fortune.

Many of an instrumentalist persuasion would argue for the importance of observing quite a detailed set of ethical guidelines on the basis that it is simply more efficient to behave ethically than to behave unethically. Unfortunately, that is a type of reasoning which has little to do with ethics. In the last analysis, the only answer to the question 'why be moral' which respects the ethical character of the question is to say, 'we ought to be moral because that is what it is to be a human being.'

The absence of a belief in any objective theory of the good robs liberal individualism today of any foundation upon which to rationally justify ethical behaviour other than the pragmatic considerations of usefulness or pleasure. The challenge facing moral educators today is to provide an alternative to this ethical desert. The writings of both Buber and Levinas show that it is possible to conceive of such an alternative based on a philosophy of openness to the other. Furthermore, it is an alternative that unquestionably resonates much more closely with how human nature is actually experienced.

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THE AESTHETIC REVELATION OF THE WORLD AS EDUCATION'S MAIN CONCERN

Dr. Wilna A.J. Meijer

University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Introduction: The Moral Significance of Literary Education

The development of, and changes in, the curricula of general education tend to show increasing differentiation rather than the opposite. Every time that cultural and social concerns are brought to play upon educational matters, new curricular areas and subjects tend to spring up. Examples include the emergence of environmental education, multicultural education, or citizenship education. Moral education (or values education) and religious education have a relatively long history and are often, though not necessarily, assumed to be distinctive areas or subjects in the curriculum. The development of spiritual education is presently gathering momentum as the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* (available since 1996) and International Conferences on Children's Spirituality (held since 2000) testify. Again a development towards a certain autonomy can be discerned. The editors of a volume of papers from the first conference state in their introduction: 'The delight in editing this volume is that we believe it marks out spiritual education as a discrete academic and educational area of study. It sits alongside values education, religious education and citizenship, but is not subsumed within any of them' (Erricker et al., 2001, p. 3).

In order to prevent the curriculum from becoming an ever expanding universe and, consequently, to prevent education and schooling claiming an ever greater part of the finite time available to human beings, especially children, it might be worthwhile to follow the opposite course and look for possible fruitful confluence, instead of ever growing expansion and differentiation, of curricular areas. An example of this is to discern the moral significance of literary education (Meijer 1997; 2001; 2002). The literary arts, from the tragic poetry of the ancients to the modern novel, educate *perception* (as Nussbaum calls it along with Henry James), which is about 'being

finely aware and richly responsible' (Nussbaum, 1992, p. 84). The reader, or tragic spectator, is 'keenly alive in thought and feeling to every nuance of the situation, actively seeing and caring for all the parties concerned' (ibid., p. 143).

The learning involved can, as 'learning by passion' (Meijer, 2001), be contrasted to 'learning by action', e.g., the 'learning by doing' of progressivist education that conceives of learners as active subjects handling situations and solving problems, and as such in a way mastering their own learning processes. Rather than being about action and intervention, 'learning by passion' is about 'being moved'. This is not to say that the learner is regarded as passive. Rather an active-receptive or indeed a perceptive attitude with a characteristic blend of activity and passivity is involved. This relates to the playfulness that, according to the hermeneutical philosophy of Gadamer and Ricoeur, characterises reading and interpretation and the appropriation of a text by readers (cf. Meijer, 2002; 2004). In playing, subjectivity forgets itself. The directions that the text opens up for thought are followed in a characteristic back and forth (*hin und her*: 'to and fro') movement. 'It is not a question of imposing upon the text our finite capacity for understanding, but of exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self' (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 143), by entering into the proposed world of the text. Therefore, paradoxically as it may at first appear, appropriation entails a 'letting go', a relinquishment (ibid., p. 191). The playfulness involved does not exclude that the matter of the text (or the world of the text) being taken seriously. On the contrary, thoughtfulness and attentiveness go with it. The image of knowledge and learning involved here is, as stated by Nussbaum, Sophoclean rather than Platonic:

The Sophoclean soul . . . advances its understanding of life and of itself not by a Platonic movement from the particular to the universal, from the perceived world to a simpler clearer world, but by hovering in thought and imagination around the enigmatic complexities of the seen particular. . . . The image of learning expressed in this style, like the picture of reading required by it, stressed responsiveness and an attention to complexity; it discourages the search for the simple and, above all, for the reductive (Nussbaum, 1993, p. 69).

The rationality involved is not governed by premeditated plans, but characterised by quietude, by the absence of haste, and the 'taking of one's time', that true reflection demands. Concepts like 'concentration', 'rumination', 'contemplation' and 'meditation' may spring to mind. This comes close to what can be considered a spiritual (and/or religious) dimension. Haim Gordon's book *Dwelling poetically* (2000; cf. Meijer 2002a), following a Heideggerian lead, pleads for teaching poetry 'in a manner that will *spiritually* enhance our existence' (2000, p. 7; italics added). According to Gordon poetry is about 'building a human dwelling upon earth' (ibid., p. 50), lighting up aspects of existence and opening up perspectives and 'realms of being'. The educational value of poetry, therefore, is immanent: the broadening of horizons and the like. Reading and listening to poetry, and enjoying it (here again the emphasis is upon playfulness and joy), is not about analysis or deconstruction along the lines of a certain theory or model. This would lead us

astray into the domain of calculation—of science and technology. Gordon seems to identify the latter with present-day consumerism and technology, and one could question whether or not he is correct. Although it is quite common to oppose the ‘sciences’ and the ‘humanities’, and although the idea of perception or *aisthesis* introduced above is primarily associated with the aesthetic, there is no reason to rule out the suitability of the perceptive-reflective attitude with regard to (non-human) nature. I see no reason to oppose this type of knowing, as non-rational, to rationality and, in so doing, to reduce the latter to processes of technological, goal-directed and goal-efficient calculation.

Herbart's Notion of the Aesthetic Revelation of the World

In the following, attention is drawn to one of the first philosophies of education of the modern era, viz., Johann Friedrich Herbart's (1776–1841), who developed his educational thought in discussion with Kant (1724–1804), the philosopher who was already influential during his lifetime, as is demonstrated by the self-evident way that Herbart again and again mentions and discusses Kantian ideas in his work. According to Herbart, Kant's conception of reason, especially practical reason, is not educationally fruitful. As an alternative Herbart develops the idea of *aesthetical* judgment and its development, and thereby presents us with an understanding of education and rationality that is not reductive and that can be said to incorporate the ‘moral’ and the ‘religious-spiritual’ dimensions. One of Herbart's first publications is especially relevant in this connection, viz., *Die aesthetische Darstellung der Welt als Hauptgeschäft der Erziehung* (The aesthetic revelation of the world as the main concern of education), which appeared in 1804, the year of Kant's death. ‘Revelation’ is the word used in a translation of this work of Herbart (1902). It is attractive and to the point as to Herbart's argument in that work, as we will hope to show below. However, the word ‘representation’ is in a general, descriptive way closer to the German ‘Darstellung’.

In this work, Herbart develops a concept of ethical judgment, together with a concept of the development of that judgment, and of education as contributing to that development. It is evident here, more so than in Herbart's later work, that ethical and educational theory converge, and this unity is accounted for by his discussion with Kant's theory of practical, ethical judgment. In Herbart's *Aesthetische Darstellung* (AD, Aesthetic Revelation) of 1804 we find a fifteen page explanation of what is later, in the *Allgemeine Pädagogik* (AP, General Theory of Education) of 1806 and the *Allgemeine Praktische Philosophie* (General Practical Philosophy) of 1808, spelled out in greater detail. It is Herbart's concern to form an idea of morality and freedom as *real possibilities*, in other words, as potentialities realisable in historical time, in contrast with the transcendental and universal character of the Kantian concepts of morality and freedom. Herbart's concern is inherently educational: the concept of the ethical is presented in unity with the concept of its development over time in childhood and youth.

This essential difference, however, should not blind us to a crucial similarity with Kant's theory of practical reason. Herbart agrees with Kant—and in this respect both thinkers are characteristically modern—that morality should not be identified with the prevailing, conventional, historically given, moralities. The ethical judgment of the free, autonomous human subject is crucial: '*Der Sittliche gebietet sich selbst*' (the moral person commands himself; AD, p. 62). But what is the *content* of this judgment? According to Herbart, Kant dismisses this essential question by turning immediately to the *form* of judgment, that is, the formal generality of the categorical imperative that distinguishes practical judgment from random arbitrariness. Herbart takes a different route.

According to Herbart, the *object* of the ethical judgment is the will, while, as a judgment, it is itself a matter of insight. Herbart's ethical-cum-educational theory pivots on the relation between will and insight. In ethical matters insight and judgment are, however, inherently characterised by reflective distanciation, concerned with will and action and especially with one's own will and action. Deliberating and judging about one's own will and action implies a certain duplicity, an essential self-referentiality and reflexivity. This duplicity is a main theme in Herbart's later work, where it returns in the distinction between 'objective' and 'subjective character' (in the AP), but can also be already discerned in the AD:

'See to it that the pupil finds itself as choosing the good and rejecting the bad: this, and nothing else, is character education! This development of a self-conscious personality should without a doubt happen in the mind of the pupil itself and it should be executed by the pupil's own activity; it would be nonsense for the educator to want to produce this essential power and to put it into the soul of the other being' (AD, p. 61–62).

From an educational perspective, this is a wonderful quotation, because it emphasises the significance of the activity of the child itself as to its own development and education, in contrast to the educational activity of the educator. It puts autonomy over heteronomy. And, although I must admit to finding the rather objectivistic designation of 'the good' and 'the bad' not really appealing from an ethical perspective, anthropologically or psychologically I appreciate the phrase concerning the experience of 'finding oneself as a choosing being'. This is reminiscent of the mix of passivity and activity already mentioned above as being crucial to human experience and understanding. Further, the educational elaboration that Herbart provides of this idea of the duplicity of a more or less grown-up and reflexive person 'finding itself as a judging and choosing being' is very interesting. According to Herbart, the indirect route of the aesthetical to the ethical is the truly educational alternative to 'the nonsense' (*Unsinn*) of the educator directly trying to influence, or even build, the character and morality of the pupil, for example, by moralising or preaching. The latter would count as 'a sort of false economy' ('eine Art falsche Ökonomie', AP, p. 179), wanting to attain at once something that can

really only be the outcome of a continuous, gradual development. It is educationally unwise to demand of pupils an instantaneous acceptance of, and obedience to, certain rules and values, instead of waiting for the development of, and the coming into existence of, the ethical judgment in the pupil; although it is a matter of common sense, when children participate in the everyday life of the community, to have them adapt to the custom and rule of that community. This is part of what Herbart calls *Regierung*—which is preparatory for education and precedes it, rather than being itself a central part of education. To wait—and to educate the mind and thoughts to wait (*die Gedanken warten lernen*; cf. Meijer, 2004a)—is an essential element in Herbart's theory of education that centres on the emerging of a link between 'scientia' and 'conscientia', knowledge and conscience (Dutch: *weten en geweten*; German: *wissen* and *Gewissen*). (In continental European educational thought this emergence of conscience out of knowledge is a line of thought continuously taken up again by 'geisteswissenschaftliche' educational theorists as, e.g., Litt, Derbolav and Imelman, cf. Imelman, 1992; 2000). The aesthetic revelation of the world is therefore the essence of education: first there needs to be the time and the room for the aesthetical judgment to develop, and, from this, ethical judgment will arise.

Aesthetical judgment arises inevitably from a full, 'completed' perception and representation of an object or situation ('vollendeten Vorstellen ihren Gegenstandes', AD, p. 64). Herbart illustrates this by the example of hearing harmonic proportions in music. Suppose that the teacher is asked to furnish further evidence, he could only laugh and regret the obtuse ear that didn't already *perceive* ('das stumpfe Ohr bedauern, das nicht schon *vernommen* hatte', *ibid.*). In other words, one can sound the musical chord, and let it be heard, but then the musical chord has to 'speak for itself'. It is impossible to produce further arguments to back up the aesthetical judgment. The aesthetical judgment springs from a completed perception and is not the outcome of any purely theoretical or logical-deductive reasoning. Aesthetical judgments are about perceptible proportions, be it in music (which is not about one isolated tone, but the collective of various tones sounding simultaneously, chords, concords, discords) or in human affairs. It is about relations between human beings, comparative relations between what the one person does, or desires to do, and what the other does or desires to do, and also between the thinking and doing, insight and will, of each person individually. Here too, judgment arises from the completed, balanced perception of comparative relations in their full concreteness and detail.

Here we arrive at the point where the aesthetical touches the ethical judgment – and thus reach the border of the area of practical philosophy or ethics where Herbart's discussion with Kant can be situated. Kant, in his three *Critiques*, distinguishes practical, ethical reason (*der praktische Vernunft*) from aesthetical reason (*Urteilkraft*, judgment)—while he had previously distinguished pure, theoretical reason (*der reine Vernunft*). However Herbart explicitly intends to connect aesthetical and ethical judgment and emphasises their shared comparative-deliberative character in which content and form are indissolubly connected.

The Role of Education: Aesthetical Revelation

What, then, is the role of education? Basically its task is the aesthetical revelation of the world – that is, to contribute indirectly to the origination of aesthetical and ethical judgment, nourishing it by increasing the pupil's knowledge and understanding of the world, in which aesthetical proportions occur in ever changing concrete configurations. For, eventually, aesthetical judgment will arise from 'completed perception' (*vollendetes Vorstellen*). Ethical judgment, and the guiding of one's own will by such judgment, is a matter for later concern—it will take care of itself once aesthetical judgment has come into existence. This should not be misread for the unwarranted optimism that people would, in actual fact, always obey the moral implications of their thought and judgment. Herbart is well aware of the divide between 'knowing' and 'doing' and of the problem of 'weakness of the will' in ethics (see Meijer, 2004a). Educationally, the matter at hand is the cultivation of 'full and balanced perception', which is, as it were, the 'material condition' for aesthetical and ethical judgment to originate. Education's first concern is what the perceived world will be like:

'This world should be a rich, wide-open sphere full of varieties of life! . . . Such a revelation of the world—the *entire* known world and *all* known ages . . .—can rightly be called the main concern of education' (AD, pp. 67, 68).

Education that is indirectly ethically relevant is thus, to put it briefly, characterised by breadth and 'many-sidedness'. To use a familiar educational term, it could be called a 'general' or a 'liberal education' (Dutch: *algemene vorming*, German: *allgemeine Bildung*). Indeed, 'allgemeine Bildung' was a term that came into use in Herbart's day. In his last work, *Umriss pädagogischer Vorlesungen*, (which appeared in 1835 and in a new edition 1841, the year of Herbart's death), Herbart himself makes use of it when he contrasts 'allgemeine Bildung' with 'Fachbildung'—'occupational education' (*Umriss*, p. 8). It is the broadly interested and versatile mind (the aim of general education) that is eventually of ethical relevance. For the person who is broad in mind, in knowledge and in thought, is also broad in desires and in interests ('wer viel kennt und denkt, der verlangt viel', AD, p. 66), whereas a restricted outlook, by its very one-sidedness, comes close to egoism. 'The one-sided person approximates the egoist, even when he does not notice it himself, because he relates everything to the small circle of his own life and thought' (*Umriss*, p. 26). Only full and balanced perception of complex situations can make the aesthetical judgment arise. The richer and fuller the world opened by education, the less one-sided and narrow-minded, and the more well-balanced, the judgment that originates from it will be. This is why school education should intentionally and methodically correct and complement the one-sidednesses acquired by the pupil in experience and human association (*Erfahrung und Umgang*) in the outside world and at home. Breadth of knowledge and understanding are essential.

In no case should education be restricted to the inculcation of certain moral rules or standards. 'The understanding of an aesthetical representation of the

world is wider . . . than morality would immediately demand. And so it should be' (AD, p. 68). Similarly conflicts, incompatibilities and collisions in human affairs should not be smoothed away or denied in order to inculcate unambiguous moral certainty: 'Man hüte sich, Geschmacksurteile (aesthetical judgments) auf einander zu reduzieren. Und, was darauf zurückkommt: Man hüte sich, Kollisionen zu läugnen' (AD, p. 68). There should be no reductionism, but many-sidedness and complexity. It is essential that education should give ample time for the aesthetical representation of the world and the origination of the aesthetical judgment. This echoes the classical connotation of the word 'school' (*scholè*) that is, 'leisure'. The school for general education should indeed be a place of, and offer the time for, perception and reflection and, to that end, have the character of an 'asylum' or a 'matorium'.

The central terminology of Herbart's 1804 text, the *Aesthetische Darstellung der Welt* (the aesthetic revelation of the world), leaves aside the question of the relative importance of the world of nature (and the sciences) and the human world (the humanities) in the education leading up to the origination of the aesthetical judgment. Already in 1806 (in the *Allgemeine Pädagogik*) it becomes clear that, in this connection, Herbart emphasises the humanities. He fulminates against those who want to keep children away from 'insight into human character' for the sake of moral purity.

'They don't *want* early knowledge of human character! In my opinion this indicates a weakness in education. However necessary it may be that youth never become *habituated* to the bad, the protection of the moral sense should not go so far, and certainly not be carried out for so long, that even young men could still be puzzled by human beings as they are. . . . To know human nature in its variety of forms is an early training of the moral eye as well as a valuable assuredness against nasty surprises. And the vivid representation of those who *were* is certainly the easiest preparation for the observation of those who *are now*. The past should be exposed clearly enough to let *its* people appear as people *like us*, and not as beings of another kind' (AP, pp. 161/162).

'History should teach mankind', states Herbart in his last work ('Die Geschichte soll die Lehrerin der Menschheit sein', *Umriss*, p. 106). The 'aesthetical objects' ('aesthetische Gegenstände'), that is, the matter of the aesthetical judgment, should not be so much outside our perspective that it would not address us as humans, but neither should it be too close and familiar. For then judgment would easily be distorted by partiality, instead of being evoked, as is characteristic to aesthetical judgments, by a full and balanced representation. Therefore, making up one's mind and judging purely on the aesthetical is best practised on 'unfamiliar instances' ('an fremden Beispielen', *Umriss*, p. 7), and this is where history comes in. It is about obtaining, at one's leisure, a clear, full and balanced perception of comparative relations, 'relations of the will' (*Willensverhältnisse*), in a way that makes the judgment arise from the perception. Self-interest and bias shouldn't disturb this

process, and that is why school education is important here: in order to allow the time to form a complete picture of comparative relations in human, historical matters, so that the aesthetical judgment has ample opportunity to develop. If aesthetical judgment is not cultivated by education in this way, then either unrestrained bias will guide one's judgment or historical situations will not be regarded as one's concern and there will be no inclination at all to think them over (*Umriß*, p. 130).

A delicate balance of involvement and distance is important. Understanding human beings, their engagements and predicaments, demands imagination and empathy together with identification and sympathy. In teaching history, history should not appear as just a chronological order or frame ('ein chronologisches Skelett', *Umriss*, p. 43), but the warmth and affect that historical persons and events evoke should be felt ('diejenige Wärme fühlen lassen, welche den historische Personen und Begebenheiten gebührt', *ibid.*). On the other hand, calm and distanced deliberation has to break through identification and involvement with the parties concerned and strike a balance to arrive at a balanced opinion that rises above necessarily limited identifications. Complexity should not be reduced for educational reasons, on the contrary, detail and nuance, contrast and contradiction should be permitted the time to come clearly into the picture. An example from Herbart's *Allgemeine Pädagogik* is quite illuminating here. It demonstrates the way that, as well as history, literature is significant to the educational mission of an aesthetic revelation of the world. So, the humanities or 'poetry and history' (*Poesie und Geschichte*) supply the matter that nourishes and fuels the development of the aesthetical judgment.

Let us now consider the example. There is every reason, according to Herbart, to take the time for Sophocles's *Philoctetes* after having learnt about Homer's *Odyssey*. In order to understand this observation, we need to understand the particular relevant difference between these two classical works. Philoctetes participates in the expedition to Troy, but he gets injured and, because of the nasty smell of his wounds, is left behind by Odysseus on the isle of Lemnos. However, the bow and arrows of Heracles are in possession of Philoctetes, and these are needed for the conquest of Troy; therefore, Philoctetes is released. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Philoctetes is one of the few Greek warriors who returns home safely after the fall of Troy. In Sophocles's tragedy, Odysseus is accompanied by the young son of Achilles, Neoptolemos. Odysseus persuades the boy to snatch the weapons from Philoctetes. Troy has to be conquered, all means to that end are admitted, and if that is the easiest way, the helpless Philoctetes should be left behind once the bow and arrows are secured. The boy hesitates, but then does as he is told. However, as he comes to witness the terrible pains of Philoctetes, he takes sides with Philoctetes against Odysseus. Only because of the appearance of Heracles, as a *deus ex machina*, can the three men eventually leave together for Troy (cf. Moormann & Uitterhoeve, 1995, p. 246).

With this example Herbart illustrates that, far from reduction, *induction* of complexity should be produced by adding the play of Sophocles to the *Odyssey*. According to Herbart, it is necessary to have pupils go, in succession, deeply

into the two works and their different perspectives on Odysseus and his relation to Philoctetes. It would be unwise educationally to present only one perspective instead of taking the two distinct perspectives successively, and it would be even more unwise to concoct an 'impure mix' ('unsaubere *Mischung*', AP, p. 189) on the basis of the two different perspectives on Odysseus in the two works. That could, I suppose, count as another example of 'false economy': instead of being stimulated, reflection would be made superfluous because of the pre-arranged, premeditated, reductionist and, probably, moralistic message of such 'summaries' created for 'educational' purposes. The only truly educational thing to do is to give pupils ample opportunity to go deeply into the various perspectives and to reflect on human matters and relationships from various angles. There is no short cut to mature aesthetical judgment.

Conclusion

In my opinion, Herbart's educational ideas are a lasting inspiration for those educators who decline to give in to the tendency of the present consumer societies of the West to attribute to schools and education the primary function of a 'commodity' for purely private purposes. In closing, I would like to turn to Goodlad to demonstrate the contrast involved.

In his John Dewey lecture, Goodlad is very critical of his society, the USA, but other Western societies can feel equally addressed. 'If education is necessary to the making of a public', Goodlad says, 'and this public is to be the civil one for which Benjamin Barber argues ('that unites the virtue of the private sector—liberty—with the virtue of the public sector—concern for the general good'), we face a mighty chasm to be bridged' (1997, p. 119). The contrast involved between 'the ideal' and 'reality' is great, as Goodlad underlines with a citation of Ron Miller's criticism on 'education in a declining culture': 'Our culture does not nourish that which is best or noblest in the human spirit. It does not cultivate vision, imagination, or aesthetic or spiritual sensitivity. It does not encourage gentleness, generosity, caring, or compassion. Increasingly in the late twentieth century, the economic-technocratic-static worldview has become a monstrous destroyer of what is loving and life-affirming in the human soul' (ibid., p. 125). Needless to say, this implies an agenda for the present century.

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THE SPIRITUAL AND RELATED DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION

Dr. Kevin Williams

Mater Dei Institute, Dublin City University

Introduction

The notion of a spiritual dimension of education acquired a particular currency following its inclusion in the aims of the National Curriculum in the United Kingdom (Carr & Haldane, 2003). The principal purpose of this chapter is to identify the connection between the spiritual and cognate dimensions of education, especially the moral, religious and aesthetic and, as well, the sense of 'spiritual' involved in speaking of the 'the spirit of an activity'. This chapter will make and explore a crucial distinction between secular and religious versions of spiritual education.

The distinction between secular and religious versions of spiritual education is analysed by Hanan Alexander and T.H. McLaughlin (Alexander and McLaughlin, 2003) in *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Education*. They refer to the religious/secular versions of spirituality as being religiously 'tethered' and 'untethered' respectively (ibid., p. 359). Recognising that these domains do not have clear boundaries, and that the very notion of religion is not clear-cut, the authors identify five characteristics of the spiritual, (I propose to change the order in which they present these characteristics and to add a sixth one in applying and developing their categories):

1. The spiritual as a search for meaning.
2. The manifestation of the spiritual in life in terms of 'basic orientations, motivations and dispositions of individuals' (ibid., p. 360) that are often expressed in personal qualities.
3. The collective or communal dimension of spirituality.

4. The spiritual as a response of wonder, awe and reverence to the world.
5. The spiritual as the 'cultivation of 'inner space'(ibid., p. 359).
6. The sixth strand that I propose to add is that of absorption.

I wish to commence by identifying what is the defining characteristic of the spiritual, religious and moral forms of life, namely, their non-instrumental and non-utilitarian character. By this is meant that none of these practices serves as a means to something else and that participation in them is not connected to earning a living or survival in what in his poem, 'The World Is Too Much with Us', Wordsworth describes as the world of 'getting and spending'. These practices bear on a quality of life which lies beyond the mere fact of living and derive their meaning from a world 'beyond utility' (Whitehead, 1926, p. 80; McCarthy, 1967, p. 26). The spiritual and the ascetic are related because, as with asceticism, spirituality involves a detachment from bodily needs and desires. To claim that being spiritual, religious or moral leads to practical benefits, or is useful, is to display a misunderstanding of the logic of these concepts.

Perhaps here we might note a certain paradox at the heart of the term 'spirituality'. Both religious and non-religious people can be described as 'spiritual' and this always implies a very positive moral evaluation of the individual. Yet when we speak of a religious person as being 'spiritual', it is a very high commendation of the quality of her or his religious engagement. In this usage being spiritual has a very strong religious sense and is entirely detached from any secular meaning.

The Search for Meaning

The first strand, the search for meaning, has religious and secular forms of expression. In religious terms, the quest for meaning, takes place within a tradition of belief and discourse about what is ultimate and what gives purpose to human life. In the secular or religiously untethered version, this quest for meaning is reflected in a sense that there is more to life than appears on the surface and is captured in the title of the U2 song, 'I still haven't found what I'm looking for'. The notion of search for meaning is often communicated in aesthetic terms and is addressed in literature classes. It is, for example, powerfully communicated in the poetry of Rilke. His search starts in a theological context but comes to assume a more religiously untethered form. His famous poem '*Ich finde dich in allen diesen Dingen*' (I find you in all these things) appears on religious websites and in books of prayer. More probing and theologically searching are *Was wirst du tun, Gott, wenn ich sterbe* (What wilt thou do, God, when I die) and *Gott spricht zu jedem nur, ehe er ihn macht* (God speaks to everyone before he makes him) (see Burnshaw, 1964, pp. 142–3). In both poems, the speaker describes a God who needs humankind to find divine fulfilment. There may well be an argument that the search for meaning in these poems is as secular as it is religious and that in fact that the poems merely express a fear of death and, indeed, demonstrate that God is a figment of the human imagination. The speaker might be characterised as a vulnerable human

being seeking solace for his mortality. Yet this reading of the poems does not do justice to the theological vision underlying them.

Two other poems that used to be taught in Irish schools (Martin, 1969) capture the religious and secular aspects of the quest for meaning very clearly. 'Felix Randal' by Gerard Manley Hopkins is a sensitive record of a priest's reaction to the illness and death of a healthy farrier. The poem also draws attention to the consolation which the sick man found in the sacraments. Although he reacted with anger to the discovery of his illness, the farrier became reconciled through the sacraments, especially through the sacrament of the sick. 'Impatient he cursed at first but mended/Being anointed and all'. By contrast, in his poem, 'Afterwards', Thomas Hardy finds a stoical consolation in the face of his own mortality by taking pleasure in the world of nature. Both poems have a spiritual dimension, but in the former this spirituality is linked to the Catholic faith.

The Character Dimension

This takes us to the second and third strands of the spiritual, namely its manifestation in orientations, dispositions and personal qualities and its collective or communal dimension. Both of these strands of the spiritual link it to the moral life. Spirituality can be given expression in particular personal qualities including self-knowledge, self-control, self-possession, self-transcendence, calmness, love, generosity, trust, hope, wisdom, serenity, openness, humility and many more. These are moral qualities related to making the individual a better person and the world a better place and have a role in both religious and secular versions of spirituality. Significantly, relationships of friendship, love, and affection, where those involved are concerned only with the enjoyment of one another and where considerations of usefulness do not apply, can also be said to have a spiritual quality. This spiritual disposition or psychological orientation can be found in individuals of religious or secular conviction and should not be identified solely with the former.

The moral and spiritual dimension come together in the concern of schools with character education and with the cultivation of an integrated personality grounded in an appropriate self-esteem. In this respect the school is perceived as an extension of the home in terms of providing personal support and overall care for young people. This conception of the school is most conspicuous in the case of boarding schools. Here is Irish novelist, Monk Gibbon's, (Gibbon, 1981) description of the school in England that features in his novel, *The Pupil*. 'A school should be a large family – a small nation' (ibid., p. 14) is the slogan of the principal and his vision of the school is animated by the conviction 'that character is everything, and that everything without character is nothing' (ibid., p. 76). The concern with character is shared by committed teachers in many schools in the English-speaking world. Here is a compelling account by a former school inspector, Gervase Phinn, of the role of the school in the education of character. He arrives in a boys' school in an area of disadvantage catering for children who have failed to get places in the traditional, academic secondary school. By virtue of attending this school, the

boys are already 'deemed to be failures' and arrive 'under-confident, with low self-esteem' (Phinn, 2000, p. 152). The task of the school, explains the principal, is 'first and foremost ... to build up their confidence and self-esteem, continue to have high expectations for them' (ibid.) and to ensure that the boys realise that the school has these expectations of them. The teachers must then:

give them maximum support and encouragement, develop their social skills and qualities of character to enable them to enter the world feeling good about themselves ... so they develop into well-rounded young people with courage, tolerance, strong convictions, lively enquiring minds and a sense of humour (ibid., pp. 152–3).

The Collective or Communal Dimension

The collective or communal dimension, which celebrates a sense of belonging, shared memory and commitment to a common purpose, has very clear religious and secular expressions. Denominational services represent the most obvious religiously tethered version of this dimension of spirituality and some sporting occasions represent one secular version. In both contexts the expression of spirituality represents a moral bonding. Yet in certain contexts the religious/secular distinction may not be all that clear-cut. Here, for example, is the description in Barbara Kingsolver's (Kingsolver, 1999) novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*, of how both aspects can be conjoined. Brother Fowles is a missionary who has gone native and has even married a Congolese and who has 'come to love the people here and their ways of thinking' (Kingsolver, 1999, p. 280). He resonates to their sense of religion:

Everything they do is with one eye to the spirit. When they plant their yams and manioc, they're praying. When they harvest, they're praying. Even when they conceive their children, I think they're praying. ... I think the Congolese have a world of God's grace in their lives (ibid., p. 278).

Christian missionaries were, he explains, not required to teach them to pray and worship as 'they already knew how to make a joyful noise unto the Lord a long time ago. ... They're very worshipful. It's a grand way to begin a church service, singing a Congolese hymn to the rainfall on the seed yams (ibid.).

In the educational context the communal dimension of spirituality can be given expression in a way that can be interpreted in terms of religious or secular spirituality. The incident recounted below by Anne Looney captures this very well. In the school where she taught, a young student died:

When the news of her death was broken in school we had a minute's silence and out of that silence was born a desire for symbolic expression which was quite awesome in its powers. The language, not of business, economics, numbers or facts, but of music, flowers and story became the only meaningful language that day. All students, on first coming to the school, make a copy

of their own footprint to be joined in sixth year by their bigger footprint. The footprint of the dead student became the rallying symbol around which, not sense, but some sort of mini-cosmology was made. The day of her death and her birthday have been remembered and the rituals surrounding these ensure that her death has become part of the school story. Using symbolic language gave us an opportunity to translate a potentially disintegrating experience into a force for integration (Looney, 1993, pp. 34–35).

The celebration of belonging, and the moral and social bonding it promotes, can therefore cross religious/secular boundaries.

Awe and Reverence

The fourth strand of the spiritual refers to feelings of awe, reverence and wonder in response to the human and natural world. Clearly these feelings can take religious and secular forms. From both a secular and religious perspective, creation is quite properly a source of awe, respect and reverence. Indeed, concern with humankind's responsibility for creation, and an aspiration to communicate this to the young people, are shared by many irrespective of religious belief. This aspect of spirituality can inform moral and civic responses to the world and by extension moral and civic education. The cultivation of awe, reverence, respect and wonder at the world is diametrically opposed to the perception of some curriculum policy-makers of the technological and scientific areas as expressions of humankind's interest in control and mastery over the environment. But this need not be the animating conception of scientific and technological work. Science and technology can be conceived, not as instruments of control, but rather as a route to developing an enhanced respect for, and love of, the world via the promotion of receptivity and responsiveness to its physical manifestations (see Walsh, 1993, p. 103). From this perspective, Walsh quotes Einstein:

A finely tempered nature longs to escape from his noisy cramped surroundings into the silence of the high mountains where the eye ranges freely through the still pure air and fondly traces out the restful contours apparently built for eternity. . . . The state of mind which enables a man [*sic*] to do work of this kind is akin to that of the religious worshipper or lover (quoted in *ibid.*).

Cultivating Inner Space

This takes us to the fifth strand of spirituality, namely, the 'cultivation of 'inner space' (Alexander and McLaughlin, 2003, p. 359). In religious spirituality this includes prayer, meditation and ritual. Many variations of prayer, meditation and ritual have, at their core, meditative music. This is perhaps one of the more developed areas of liturgical music with Taizé, Gregorian chant and countless pieces of music specifically composed for meditation available. The exploration of inner space in secular contexts has prompted the development of meditative music

with therapeutic purposes aimed to provide moments of respite from the stress and pressure of life, for example, *The Chillout Album*, *Pan Pipe Moods*. In the educational context, the cultivation of the inner space can take both religious and secular forms and classes devoted to meditation can take place as part of religious education or moral/pastoral education. This strand of spirituality is linked to the final dimension, that of absorption.

Absorption

Absorption is an activity that has both religious and secular aspects. Everyday life offers experiences which can be characterised as spiritual in this sense. Aspects of this experience are to be found in any activity in which we engage for the pleasure of it, and not for an extrinsic purpose such as a reward. Even activities which we undertake for the purpose of promoting our physical survival may be capable of yielding the kind of satisfaction on their own account which can be characterised as spiritual. Our work (as the Christian monastic tradition testifies), setting a fire, cooking a meal, mowing a lawn or driving to work may represent for us satisfactions to be enjoyed rather than chores to be endured in the business of survival. Leisure activities, such as sailing or fishing that are undertaken, not as a passive respite from the business of survival, but rather for the sheer satisfaction they provide, bring us even closer to this quality of the spiritual.

Let us look more closely at what absorption in the spirit of an activity means. The nature of both engagement and disengagement in a secular context are well captured in the novel, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle*, by Robert Pirsig (1988). Consider the latter first. The narrator encounters a group of mechanics who, although good-humoured and cheerful in their attitude towards him, are without commitment to their work. They were 'uninvolved' and 'like spectators':

You had the feeling they had just wandered in there themselves and somebody had handed them a wrench. There was no identification with the job. No saying. 'I am a mechanic.' At 5 p.m. or whenever their eight hours were in, you knew they would cut it off and not have another thought about their work. They were already trying not to have any thoughts about their work *on* the job. ... Or rather, they had something to do with it, but their own selves were outside of it, detached, removed. They were involved in it but not in such a way as to care (Pirsig, 1988, p. 26).

By contrast a craftsperson who is deeply involved in his work will: ... be absorbed and attentive to what he's doing even though he (*sic*) doesn't deliberately contrive this. His motions and the machine are in a kind of harmony. He isn't following any set of written instructions because the nature of the material at hand determines his thoughts and motions, which simultaneously change the nature of the material at hand. The material and his thoughts are changing together in a progression of changes until his mind's at rest at the same time as the material's right ... (ibid, p. 161).

Skilled practitioners of a craft 'have patience, care and attentiveness to what they're doing, but more than this—there's a kind of inner peace of mind that isn't contrived but results from a kind of harmony with the work in which there is no leader and no follower' (ibid., p. 289). The unselfconscious peace of mind that such work can induce derives from this 'harmony' or 'fusion' (ibid.) between the person and the world where the 'material and the craftsman's thoughts change together in a progression of smooth, even changes until his mind is at rest at the exact instant the material is right' (ibid.). The promotion of this kind of rapt involvement in worthwhile activities is one aim of all education.

The notion of absorption can receive a religious orientation. The spiritual author, Donagh O'Shea has written very persuasively of the manner in which absorption in an activity can lead to religious spirituality. In this passage he describes the great joy which a person experienced the first time he learned to centre clay on a potter's wheel:

The exhilaration of this went straight to the head and made me quite giddy for a time. The most puzzling aspect was the effortlessness. The lumps of clay seemed to centre themselves without my help . . . The clay had drawn my body, inch by inch, into the task: hands, arms, shoulders, trunk, even feet. When there was no more body to be drawn in, it drew in the mind . . . The whole body and mind working together: that was a more profound centring than the centring of the clay (O'Shea, 1992, pp. 9–10).

Elsewhere he advises to:

go out of yourself so completely, become so fully involved in everything you see and do, that you forget yourself completely; that is what I mean by becoming nothing. When you become nothing moment by moment you become a new person moment by moment (O'Shea, 1997, p. 74).

Absorption and the Aesthetic

Absorption also has a very salient aesthetic dimension. In so far as aesthetic experience involves creating and responding to images (in language, music, painting and plastic form) simply and exclusively for the sake of the delight they give us, it thereby provides a special kind of absorption. In a religiously tethered spirituality, this can be conceived as an echo or resonance of our experience of God. Note here that I am using the term 'delight' rather than 'pleasure' to characterise aesthetic experience. Pleasure is associated with entertainment, distraction, and diversion and these belong to the world of 'getting and spending' rather than to that of spirituality. In the world of aesthetic experience even the pity and fear prompted by the depiction of a tragic situation (such as that of King Lear) provokes aesthetic delight rather than feelings of sadness.

This is the kind of delight experienced by a person reading a poem or novel, watching a play, listening to a piece of music, or looking at a painting whom we would describe as engrossed, absorbed, wrapped up or lost in what she is doing. In

this situation we are talking of a very special identification between the individual and her activity where the disjunction or gap between the person and this activity is most reduced. I suspect that in these moments we come near to that loss of self involved in mystical experience (Smith, 1987). Responding to great works of art can therefore offer rare moments in which some faint echoes of such experience are to be found. Whether we characterise this in religious or secular terms is really an individual matter.

The Spirit of an Activity

In conclusion we should note the connection between absorption and doing something in the right spirit or entering into the spirit of an activity. There is something morally questionable about learning that is not undertaken in the right spirit. Commonly it is claimed that much learning in school is done for instrumental reasons—to succeed in examinations and to benefit from the exchange value of this success through entry to further education or to employment. I do not believe that we are in a position to claim that students are learning for the wrong reasons and, although it would be foolish to deny that this can happen, it is hardly inevitable. There is no doubt that human beings tend to act from multiple motives and that there will be some tension inherent in a system which uses academic success for instrumental purposes—to determine suitability for further education or for employment. Yet it does not mean that the educational value of all learning conducted in this context is compromised by the intrusion of external motivation. There is no reason why students studying for examinations should not also derive pleasure and satisfaction from their study. What I do want to note is that engaging in the spirit of an activity, and pursuing it for morally and educationally appropriate reasons, are linked.

Thus, the spiritual dimension of life is intimately connected to its moral, religious and aesthetic dimensions.

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EXPANDING THE THEOLOGICAL IMAGINATION IN THE SERVICE OF INTER FAITH DIALOGUE: IMPULSES FROM VATICAN II

Dr. Dermot A. Lane

Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University

Introduction

Central to any consideration of religious education in an interfaith context is an understanding of the nature and scope of revelation, of the presence of God in the experience of all human beings and in the lives of the founders of the major Religions of the world. For Christians who believe that Jesus, the Christ, is the full revelation of God, there is the additional problem of relating this belief to the revelation made available by the other religious traditions of humankind. Our understanding of these theological concepts has profound educational implications. In what follows I will discuss the shift in the understanding of these concepts that occurred with the Roman Catholic Church leading up to, during and after the Second Vatican Council and propose a basis, from a Christian perspective, of a theology of Religions to underpin an approach to inter-religious dialogue both generally and within religious education in particular.

Vatican II and Contemporary Roman Catholic Understanding of Revelation

In 1965 the Second Vatican Council promulgated several documents relevant to religious education and interfaith dialogue, especially the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)* and the *Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions*, known as *Nostra Aetate*. Four decades after their publication

we need to take account of the very different context in which questions today about Christianity, about other religions and about inter-religious dialogue arise.

Religion has moved to the centre of the stage in the early years of the twenty-first century—but not always for the right reasons. Religion, today, is closely associated with terror and violence, especially in the light of 9/11 and what is now known as 7/7 bombings in London. Alongside this development there is also the rise of fundamentalism within Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Further, there is the promotion of what is termed ‘tolerance’ towards all religions, but for such tolerance, one should more often read indifference and apathy, inspired by the relativism of post-modern culture. A further feature of the early part of the twenty-first century is the presence of globalisation, which is bringing the human family together like never before and at the same time highlighting the necessity for dialogue among the major religions. Furthermore, in Europe there are now new streams of increasingly successful secularism and unbridled capitalism, which make it difficult to talk about religion and God in the public square. Taking transcendence seriously in Europe, and engaging with the religious dimension of human experience, is socially and culturally problematic for many. This new cultural context in Western Europe has given rise to the privatisation of faith and raises serious questions about the possibility of God-talk in public life - as can be seen in discussions surrounding the drafting of the EU Constitution. Europe has lost its hold on the mystery of God or to put it another way God’s presence has become less visible in European culture. The classical synthesis between God, the cosmos and the human self has collapsed and so far nothing has replaced it. This new situation in Europe exists in contrast to the US where religion and politics have become excessively intertwined.

A further feature of the new context in which we find ourselves concerns the rise of multiculturalism across Europe. Multiculturalism has become the politically correct and acceptable response to the migration of diverse ethnic groups. However, recent events in the UK as evidenced in the London bombings of July 2005 and the riots in France during the autumn of 2005 suggest that multiculturalism may not be succeeding as well as people thought. In reality there is growing evidence that multiculturalism is giving rise to the creation of socially unhealthy ghettos. Multiculturalism should not be about the assimilation of the minority by the majority; instead it should be about cultural integration in a way that respects difference, acknowledges diversity and values otherness. What is needed in Europe is intercultural exchanges and inter-religious dialogue that welcome and value the human and religious ‘other’. Multiculturalism poses enormous educational and theological challenges. On the basis of the theologies implicit in *Dei Verbum* and *Nostra Aetate* of Vatican II Christians can face this changed context more constructively and fruitfully in the company of our Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim friends, instead of facing these challenges alone as Christians. It is in this context that I want to take up some aspects of the challenge of constructing a Christian theology of Religions that might inform intercultural exchanges and inter-religious dialogue.

A New Perspective on Revelation Reflected in *Dei Verbum*

We shall first consider the constitution of the Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, particularly chapter one which is concerned with the nature of revelation and which represented a development in perspective in the Catholic Church's self-understanding of revelation. To appreciate this change we must briefly outline of the teaching of the First Vatican Council on revelation in 1870. The predominant horizon of Vatican I on revelation was one that identified revelation with a body of supernatural truths. Vatican I was the first Council to deal formally and explicitly with the theme of revelation. Its decree, *Dei Filius* (1870), deals with the mystery of God, revelation, faith and reason. The immediate background to this decree was the existence of fideism and rationalism stemming from the Enlightenment as well as certain forms of deism. Against fideism Vatican I asserted the power of human reason to know God through reflection on created realities. In opposition to rationalism it affirmed the existence of supernatural revelation and the absolute necessity of this revelation for a proper understanding of the final end of the person. Within this context it talked about supernatural revelation in terms of the communication of divine mysteries, the doctrine of the faith, the deposit of faith and revealed truths. A sharp distinction was made between natural and supernatural revelation (*Dei Filius* in Neuner & Dupuis, 1983, pp. 40–48). Very little reference was made to the person of Christ as the source of revelation. The major emphasis was on revelation as a body of truths that have been handed down in Scripture and tradition.

It is against this background that we must read the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* from the Second Vatican Council. Without this point of comparison much of the richness and significance of *Dei verbum* would be lost. What is perhaps most significant about the Second Vatican Council on revelation is that the first draft of the decree in 1962 incorporated the primary emphasis of Vatican I on revelation as a body of truth, whereas the final text of 1965, which came after four further drafts, presented revelation in a new and different perspective (Baum 1967; Ratzinger 1969; O'Collins 1970; Bouillard 1972).

In broad terms we can say that *Dei Verbum* sees revelation as the personal self-communication of God to people in the history of salvation which reaches its fullness in the person of Jesus Christ. Revelation no longer appears simply as a body of supernatural truths contained in Scripture and taught by the Church. There is a clear movement in *Dei verbum* away from revelation as simply truths disclosed (*revelata*) to personal disclosure (*revelatio*) (Ratzinger, 1969, p. 178). The basic emphasis is now placed on the personal self-communication of God to humanity in Christ. This does not neglect or diminish the new knowledge expressed in doctrine that results from this personal disclosure (*DV* n.6). It does imply, however, that this new knowledge is something consequent to the more important emphasis on the personal self-communication of God in Christ.

Dei Verbum points out that the response in faith to revelation is a response of the whole person and not just a matter of the intellect. This response is addressed 'to

the truth revealed' (*DV* n. 5) in the person of Christ as distinct from an intellectual assent merely given to a body of truths. This faith response results from the grace of God in the world and the activity of the Holy Spirit, which moves the mind and heart by drawing the individual towards God (*DV* n. 5). The unity that exists between revelation and faith is thus clearly recognised in the decree. *Dei Verbum* also grants a proper place to human experience in the process of revelation. This was a major breakthrough in view of the fact that an appeal to experience in revelation had been outlawed in the condemnations of modernism at the beginning of the twentieth century. The constitution states that 'Israel came to know by experience the ways of God' (*DV* n. 14) with people. The medium of God's self-revelation to humanity in the past and present is human experience.

This summary of *Dei Verbum* indicates the change in focus that took place at Vatican II concerning the Church's understanding of revelation. Clearly the language, the perspectives and the priorities are different from those of Vatican I. The language of Vatican II is dynamic, experiential and personalist. The perspective is no longer dualistic but rather unified and historical. The priorities are centred on the personal self-communication of God experienced in history and the fullness of that revelation embodied in Christ. Thus revelation is about the personal communication and dialogic relationship that exists between God and humanity in past and present history. The task of theology is to keep that divine-human exchange active and alive from the side of humanity. If the reality of the loving relationship between God and God's people is seen simply as something that can be summed up in a body of truths, then the emphasis in interfaith dialogue will be simply one of safeguarding the deposit of faith. This will lead inevitably to an excessive concern with the defence of a verbal orthodoxy at the expense of a living, active faith among the people of God. Verbal orthodoxy is not enough in a world that is sensitive to language-changes, keenly aware of its own historicity, immersed in cultural shifts wherein the medium expresses the message, and in need of the healing that can come through inter-religious dialogue. If, on the other hand, the loving relationship between God and humanity in revelation is seen as something that goes beyond a body of truths into the deeper realms of the interpersonal, the experiential and the historical, then the concern of inter-religious dialogue will be to express imaginatively that relationship in a language and culture that is in touch with people's present, personal, and historical experience of God not just within Christianity but within all the Religions of the world. For the Christian, this can only be achieved by returning to the revelation of God in Christ, not for the sake of repeating the past but with a view to understanding the present revelation of God through the Spirit in the Church and the world. The constitution *Dei Verbum* from Vatican II challenges the Church to perform this theological task by focusing on revelation as primarily a relational and personal encounter with the reality of God in Christ. On more than one occasion the Council stated quite clearly and explicitly that the mission of the Church is above all 'to reveal the mystery of God, who is the ultimate goal of man, (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 41; *Ad Gentes*, n. 9).

Nostra Aetate and Inter-Religious Dialogue

We turn now to consider the second of our two documents from the Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate*, the *Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions* (1965). One of the problems with the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* is, as Karl Rahner points out, that it 'does not explicitly present a concept of revelation which is easily accessible to African and Asian cultures, particularly since the millennia between 'primitive revelation' and Abraham remains unfilled' (Rahner, 1988, p. 81). This apparent deficit in the constitution on revelation is, however, made up, at least implicitly, in the council's *Declaration on the Church's relation to non-Christian religions*. This latter document provides a positive appraisal of the great religions of the world, which implies and demands a wider theology of revelation than that given in the constitution on revelation. In other words these two documents can read as complimenting each other. This view is strengthened by the fact that other documents from the council, such as those on the Church (*Lumen Gentium/LG*), the missions (*Ad Gentes/AG*), and the pastoral constitution on Church in the World (*Gaudium et Spes/GS*) affirm the presence of the universal saving will of God which can only be restricted by a personal decision made in bad conscience (Rahner, 1988, p. 81–82). These other documents talk about the seeds of the word of God (*AG*, 11), the universal action of the Spirit (*GS*, 22; *AG*, 4), elements of grace and truth (*AG*, 9), and a ray of that truth which enlightens all (*NA*, 2) as present in varying degrees in the other major religions of the world.

These scattered, but no less important, references in the documents of the Council have prompted commentators to interpret Vatican II as a 'theological event' (Barnes, 2002, pp. 49, 50, 54, 58; Oesterreicher 1969, p. 1). *Nostra Aetate*, and the subsequent post-conciliar documents, effected a new theological awareness in the Roman Catholic Church. A new vision of God's providential relationship with all people is straining to come into view in these documents of the Council and this new vision requires an expansion of the religious imagination.

I wish to focus specifically on three theological areas affected by this expansion of the religious imagination, namely the Spirit, revelation, and Christ. Firstly, how are we to articulate a theology of the Spirit of God active before and after the Christ event? Both the Council and John Paul II in his encyclicals talk about the universal action of the Spirit of God in the world in a way that pushes back the boundaries of the theological imagination. Secondly, in *Nostra Aetate*, there is a tilting towards a theology of general or universal revelation, when it talks about all human beings coming from the one God and sharing a common destiny, about God's providential and saving designs extending to the whole of humanity, and that often a ray of the truth which enlightens all can be found in other religions (*NA*. 1 and 2). A third aspect of Christianity that was influenced by the enlargement of the theological imagination at Vatican II is the Catholic understanding of the person of Jesus as the Christ. This leads to the challenge to re-express the connection between the universal action of the Spirit in the world and the historical particularity of the

Christ event. If we are to take seriously our thesis that Vatican II was ‘a theological event’ we must reformulate our theologies of the Spirit, revelation and of Christ so that Christians can encounter the richness of other religious traditions.

The Universality of God’s Grace in the World as the Key to Inter-Religious Dialogue

A good place to start this reformulation of Christian theologies of the Spirit, revelation and Christ is grace. A number of reasons suggest that a theology of grace is the proper point of departure for constructing a new and viable theology of inter-religious dialogue. Firstly, one’s approach to other religions is influenced, often unconsciously, by the underlying theology of grace. For example, those who espouse a dualist view of the relation between nature and grace usually end up with an exclusivist understanding of Christianity. On the other hand, those who adopt an intrinsicist understanding of nature and grace veer towards an inclusivist theology of religions - although within this inclusivism there is of course many variations (D’Costa, 2002, p. 333–334).

A second reason for starting with grace is that one of the influences shaping Vatican II was what was known as *La Nouvelle Theologie* which prepared the way for the Council in the 1930’s, 40’s and 50’s. This new theology had been worked out by people like Y. Congar, H. de Lubac and D. M. Chenu, all of whom sought to go beyond the extrinsicism of neo-scholastic theology in the early half of the twentieth century. In contrast to the manuals, all three sought to overcome the separation and dualism that had developed concerning nature and grace. All three brought nature and grace into a new (new at that time but old in terms of the patristic and medieval tradition) and intimate relationship, without conflating the two—even though all three differed on where they placed the emphasis. This new theology of grace played a very significant role at the Council since all of the above three theologians were experts at the council (*periti*). It was this theology of the intrinsic relationship between nature and grace that enabled the Council to charter a new and positive relationship between the Church and the world (*GS*), between the Catholic Church and other Christian churches (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), and between the temporal and the eternal aspects of Christian faith (*GS*). More than anything else it was this theology of grace that enabled the Church to adopt a positive view of other religions in *Nostra Aetate*, *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, and *Ad Gentes*. John Oesterreicher, one of the main drafters of *Nostra Aetate*, points out that it was a ‘theology of the omnipresence of grace’ that made *Nostra Aetate* possible (Oesterreicher, 1969, p. 90–93).

This influence of a new theology of grace can be found scattered throughout the Council documents. For our purposes here, it is sufficient to note the following rather striking statements: *Lumen Gentium* (LG a. 13) asserts that: ‘All are called to salvation by the grace of God’ and then the document goes on to state that those non-Christians who seek God with a sincere heart are ‘moved by grace, to try... to do his will as they know it through the

dictates of their conscience' (*ibid.*, a. 16). Likewise, *Gaudium et Spes* (GS a. 25) talks about 'all people in whose heart grace is active invisibly'. Further, the document *Ad Gentes* on the missions (AG a. 9) explicitly speaks about 'those elements of Truth and Grace' in other religions, which it says 'are . . . a secret presence of God'. In a similar vein, John Paul II affirmed that salvation in Christ is accessible to those outside the Church 'by virtue of a grace which . . . enlightens them in a way . . . accommodated to their spiritual and material situation' (*Redemptoris Missio*, 1990, a. 10). These few references highlight the underlying assumption of the universality of the grace of God in the world.

One of the theologians who has done most to develop a theology of universal grace in the world, and therefore in other religions, is Karl Rahner (Lane, 2005, p. 91–112). For Rahner, every human being comes into the world graced by God and this orientation towards God gives rise to what he calls the 'supernatural existential' within every human being (Rahner, 1961, p. 297–317). According to Rahner *all* are called to communion with God by grace and this universality of the grace of God touches and affects the constitution of every human being. Rahner refers to this universality of God's grace in the world as transcendental, which reveals itself in the dynamic activities of human knowing, loving and acting. What this means in practice for inter-religious dialogue is that all participants in the dialogue are recipients of God's universal saving grace, and this more than anything else changes the character of the relationship among all participants in dialogue.

Towards a Spirit-Centred Theology of Religions

I now wish to apply this understanding of the universality of God's grace in the world to an enlargement of Christian theologies of the Spirit, revelation and Christ. In this way, Christians can begin to move towards a theology of other religions that is able to transform the tired triad of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, a typology that has outlived its initial usefulness because it has failed to promote mutual understanding among religions. As we have seen, one of the theological themes emphasised at Vatican II was the recognition of the action of the Spirit of God in the world and other religions. For example, the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* points out that the Spirit offers to all the possibility of being associated with the paschal mystery of Christ (GS a. 22). This emphasis of Vatican II on the Spirit is also found in the writings of John Paul II. In *Redemptoris Missio* (1990: a. 29) John Paul II explicitly states that it has been a theology of the Spirit that has guided his own deliberations on the relationship of Christianity to other religions.

It is surely more than just a co-incidence that, towards the end of their lives, two of the most influential theologians of the twentieth century came around to emphasising the need to give primacy to the Spirit within a theology of other

religions. Paul Tillich, in the light of his encounter with other religions, wanted to rewrite his systematic theology around the Spirit and in doing so, he sought to present other religions as instances of a Spiritual Presence in the world. Tillich saw other religions as communities formed by the action of the Spirit and it was in this context that he presented Christianity as a religion of the concrete presence of the Spirit (Tillich, 1966, p. 90–91). In a not dissimilar fashion, Karl Rahner, in the autumn of his life, also wanted to give primacy to the Spirit over Christ out of ‘respect for all the major religions outside Christianity’ (Rahner, 1988, p. 97).

In the light of this new emphasis on the Holy Spirit at the Council, in the writings of John Paul II, and among various theologians, I want to propose that a theology of the Spirit—Pneumatology—may be the more appropriate point of departure for the construction of a theology of other religions and dialogue with other faiths. To begin with the Spirit is to begin with a theological symbol that is more recognisable and more universally available to most of the major religions. Further, it should be noted that the action of the Spirit in the world precedes the advent of Christ and the revelation of the Trinity in the person of Christ. From a historical point of view, and contrary to popular perception, the proper theological sequence within the doctrine of the Trinity is a movement from the Spirit to the person of Christ to God the Father. The Spirit of God has been active in the world, prior to the formation of the Judaeo-Christian tradition and a good case exists for arguing that the proper Trinitarian sequence is God the Spirit, to God the Son Incarnate in Jesus, to God the Father (See Crowe, 1985, p. 10–16; Phan, 2004, p. 38, n. 65). Furthermore, by recognising the action of the Spirit in the world and other religions, Christians will be in a better position to recognise the Spirit as active in the life of Christ and in the Christian community today.

Within such a Spirit-centred perspective we can begin to see all religions, including Christianity, as creative responses to the gift of God’s Spirit poured out on humanity from the beginning of time. All religions, in virtue of the outpouring of the Spirit, can be said to belong to one and the same spiritual family and are connected in varying degrees to the Spirit of God active in the world. All religions are Spirit-inspired and Spirit-driven. Failure by Christians to recognise the Spirit-gifted character of other religions will inevitably reduce their own capacity to appreciate Christianity as a particular spiritual community shaped by the Spirit of Christ and, therefore, linked to other religions as communities of the spiritual presence.

In entering into dialogue with other religions, Christians need to remember that they are encountering others who are already touched and gifted by the Spirit of God and that, therefore, there is a fundamental unity within the Spirit among all religions. It is this unity in the Spirit that is the basis of respect, reverence and appreciation of the ‘other’. All human beings, in the light of this primacy given to the mission of the Spirit, are in a manner of speaking ‘Spiritans’ and therefore there is a sense in which others could be called ‘anonymous Spiritans’ (Crowe, 1985, p. 18) without some of the complications attached to Rahner’s notion of ‘anonymous Christians’.

Revelation

The second area requiring some change in the light of *Nostra Aetate* and subsequent church documents is revelation. There is a growing awareness among participants within inter-religious dialogue of the need for a more unified, integrated, and inclusive theology of revelation. As both *Nostra Aetate* and John Paul II (*Redemptoris Missio*, a.5) suggest, we must go further back beyond the biblical religions to understand the action of the Spirit of God in the world. This theology of revelation must be inclusive so that other religions may begin to recognise themselves within the discourse and language of revelation employed by Christians. This means Christians must begin to appreciate the revelatory presence of God operative outside the mainstream of Christianity. In addition, this expanded theology of revelation must be universal in scope, reaching back beyond the bible to the millions of people who lived before Abraham and reaching forward to touch those who, for whatever reason, live their lives removed from the major religious traditions. Lastly, this theology of revelation must move beyond Christian fulfilment theories, which, as Aloysius Pieris points out, often 'neutralise' other religions and fail to recognise the irreducible core of other living faiths (Pieris, 1988, p. 60).

Karl Rahner has provided the broad parameters of such a unified and integrated theology of revelation on the basis of the universality of God's grace in the world. Because the grace of God is 'given always and everywhere to all human beings, whether they accept it or not' there is within every human being a fundamental drive towards self-transcendence (Rahner, 1986, p. 75). It is this drive towards self-transcendence, this restless presence within the human spirit, this openness of 'spirit in matter' to the future, which is the basis of revelation, and so Rahner posits a close relationship between the history of revelation, and the history of the world (Rahner, 1966). There is, in virtue of the universality of God's grace in the world, what Rahner, on the one hand, calls the universal transcendental revelation and, on the other hand, what he refers to as the presence of particular and categorical revelation. The whole of Rahner's theology can read as an attempt to describe the interplay between transcendental revelation, available to all, and categorical revelation available in religious texts, traditions, and rituals.

This broad, expanded, and universal framework for understanding revelation must be grounded and correlated with the history of religions. According to Jacques Dupuis, it is now possible to distinguish between the great Monotheistic religions and the Mystical religions of the East. The Monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam are made up of historical and prophetic revelation. The primary religious experience making the Monotheistic religions possible is one of 'ecstasy', that is, some form of inter-personal encounter with God as 'other' in history. On the other hand, the Mystical religions of the East are made up of interior moments of revelation. The primary religious experience among the Mystical religions is one of 'intasy', that is an interior experience 'in the cave of the heart' which entails varying elements of emptiness, absorption and unification (Dupuis, 2002, p. 121–123).

A Spirit-Christology

If the grace of God is universal, and if the action of the Spirit is the first self-communication of God to the world giving rise to general revelation—and this does seem to be the teaching of the Catholic Church at Vatican II and in the post-conciliar period—then this requires the relocation of the mystery of Christ within this wider framework. In other words, Christians must see Christ not only in the particular context of the originality of Judaism but also within the larger framework of the universality of grace of God and the action of the Spirit in other religions.

How then do we relate the Christ-event to this wider history of grace? How do we connect Christ with the many responses to the universality of the Spirit of God found in other religions? One way of doing this is to adopt a Spirit Christology, that is a Christology which is connected with the outpouring of the Spirit of God at the beginning of time. A Spirit Christology does not mean that abandoning other Christologies, such as the Logos Christology or the Son of God Christology or Wisdom Christology. Instead, a Spirit Christology should be seen as complementary to these other Christologies. Further, a Spirit Christology is more suitable as a point of departure for dialogue with other religions, mainly because it has the capacity to establish some common ground and some degree of continuity between Jesus and the founders and figures of other religions.

A Spirit Christology will begin by emphasising that the Spirit of God poured out into the world at the beginning of time is the same Spirit who is now personally active and present in the historical life and ministry of Jesus as well as the death and destiny of Jesus. The Spirit of God enables, empowers, and energises the person of Jesus throughout his life. In other words, Jesus is called, sent, and filled with the Spirit of God. It is this historical presence of the Spirit in Jesus that others experienced when they encountered Jesus in his life, in his death and in his resurrection. The Christ-event is not an isolated event of the Spirit in history, is not some exception to the universal action of the Spirit in the world, is not a divine bolt of the Spirit out of the blue. Instead we must begin to see the Christ event as the crystallisation of what has been going on in history through the Spirit of God from the beginning of time, a kind of microcosm of the action of the Spirit in the macrocosm of life, a concentration, or intensification, of the Spirit's presence in creation, a culminating point of the activity of the Spirit in saving history—in a word the Christ-Event is the sacrament of the Spirit of God in the world.

It is important within inter-religious dialogue to be able to see simultaneously similarities and differences between Christianity and other religions. In a Spirit-Christology there are some similarities between Jesus and the historical figures of other religions: a man marked out by the Spirit of God, mediating the Spirit of God to the world, and embodying the Spirit of God in a particular form. It is within these similarities that Christians also affirm significant differences between Christianity and other religions: seeing Jesus, crucified and risen as constitutive of salvation, as the definitive Word of God made flesh in history, and the final revelation of God as Father through the power of the Spirit. In this way a Spirit-Christology, when taken

in conjunction with existing Christologies of the Logos, Son and Wisdom moves towards a Trinitarian understanding of the one God. Further, for the Christian, the shape of the Spirit of God abroad in the world and the Christian community is Christomorphic: prophetic, paschal, incarnational, and sacramental in its many manifestations.

Conclusion

Nostra Aetate effected a most significant breakthrough at Vatican II, a breakthrough best understood as ‘a theological event’, an event pointing to the action of the Spirit of God outside Christianity, to the presence of the seeds of the Word in other religions, to the existence of elements of truth and grace in other faiths, and to a ray of the truth that enlightens all. These emphases of the Council, when taken together, represent a significant theological shift and a new theological awakening; this shift is based ultimately on a theology of the universality of the grace of God in the world and the action of the Spirit of God in history. This development requires an expansion of the theological imagination, with particular reference to a theology of the Spirit, of revelation and of Christ. Most of all, this theological shift puts Christians into a new relationship with other religions and provides a basis for new levels of dialogue and mutual enrichment. This process of dialogue and mutual enrichment has only just begun and will exercise the imagination of all-religions in the coming decades. In the meantime Christians are discovering through the gift of other religions new ways of being Christian. It is increasingly evident that to be Christian requires that one must also be inter-religious. In this way the Christian imagination will not only be enlarged—but it will be enriched by the encounter with other religions.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PERSPECTIVES OF WORLD RELIGIONS

Joseph McCann

All Hallows College, Dublin

Introduction

Religious people educate for religious reasons. They accept students, set up schools, engage teachers, write text books, organise curricula and establish educational systems in order to teach religious truths, encourage religious conduct and foster religious community. A religion is a complex of human activity, involving many elements. These elements are sometimes listed as:

- Creed: what religious people believe,
- Cult: how religious people worship,
- Code: how religious people live,
- Community: how religious people associate with each other,
- Consciousness: how religious people experience life,
- Culture: how religious people express human, civic and social identity.

Different world religions lay special emphasis on one or other of these elements, though not generally to the exclusion of the other ones. For example, Islam and Judaism accentuate Code and Community respectively. Hinduism focuses on the practice of Cult, Buddhism on Consciousness, and Chinese Confucian religion on Culture. Seen in this light, Christian concentration on the Creed, the content of belief and cognitive knowledge in religious education, can be identified as unique.

This article will outline the perspectives of the major world religions on religious, moral and spiritual education with a focus on their theological, philosophical, social and cultural differences. This will articulate how Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese Religion, Islam, and Judaism influence educational structures, leading to distinct approaches to religious, moral and spiritual formation.

Hinduism

Hinduism is the religion of the land beyond the Indus. This indicates two things about Hinduism: that it is a name given by non-Indians, and that it is a religion for a specific part of the world and a particular people. But Hinduism is not a parochial and limited religion. It is a world-view shared throughout Asia, through the influence of its stepdaughter, Buddhism, and through its own outreach during the last century.

Hinduism is ecumenical by nature. By force of history, it assimilated a multiplicity of regional beliefs and practices. Accordingly, Hindus developed a theology of world religions that is coherent in its philosophy, and contemporary in its toleration. Hindu openness rests on two beliefs: everything is a manifestation of the Ultimate, and everyone is lost in illusion. (Ward, 2000, 90) Therefore, no one can claim an authoritative superiority about truth and salvation.

Hindu World-View

Hindus believe in a multiplicity of divinities, which allows for breadth of spirituality and diversity in worship. There is no insistence on communal worship, for instance, such as we find in Christian Sunday or the Jewish Sabbath. Hinduism respects the individuality and particular circumstances of the individual.

Hindus recognise divinity in everything and in everyone. The universe is an illusion (*maya*) masking that all is *Brahman*, the Supreme Being. Individual beings are but bubbles on the stream of life, eventually merging into the great ocean of *Brahman*. One should not use the title 'God' because that suggests a parallel with the Jewish, Christian or Muslim God. For the Hindu, though, *Brahman* is the Ultimate Reality. Human beings are in an unfortunate situation, bound to the wheel of life and death (*Samsara*). Each is whirled by *Samsara* through a succession of existences with no escape except at the end of an arduous process. The consequence of human action is inexorable. Anything we do rebounds on us. Fate (*Karma*) ensures that liberation is difficult and exacting. Liberation (*Moksha*) occurs when an individual realises that *Brahman* is within, that *Brahman* is *Atman* (the soul), and that all life is divine. This insight leads to happiness, because individuality is transcended, and there is an end to imprisonment in the cycle of death and birth.

Hindu Society and Culture

India is an ancient land with an ancient civilization. Its religion served the social function of unifying religious traditions in a common theological framework that made sense of both plurality and tolerance. The Jewish people were victims of oppression, and their religion hopes for social change in order to achieve justice. Indians, however, had a religion that provides security in the status quo (Ward, 1994, 135). The caste system, for instance, with its levels of social class depends for its stability and success on the conviction that each individual is fated to live many

lives in different circumstances, and that the present situation is somehow just and right because it is the result of decisions in a previous life.

Release for humankind is through the discipline (*Yoga*) of ethical thought, devotion or action. This discipline differs for each situation in life according to the laws of *Karma*. There are four classes or castes (*Varnas*) and a caste imposes particular duties on its members. Priests (*Brahmins*) have a different ethic to soldiers (*Kshatriya*), merchants (*Vaishya*) and labourers (*Shudras*). The *Bhagavad Gita* teaches that it is better to do the duty of one's own caste badly than to do the duty of another caste well. (*Bhagavad Gita* 33:5) Hindu ethics then accepts the social order as it is with no reliance on the transforming efficacy of moral action.

Hinduism values personal rituals, family devotions, and community ceremonials that hold people together in a respectful connection with each other and with nature. This mind-set of social resignation encountered the drive for independence, nationalism and progress that swept the world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and in which India fully participated. Reformers promoted progressive education on the Western model—and this resulted in a struggle between secular scientific education and traditional Hindu educational values. It is in this context that Hindu religious, spiritual and moral education must be seen.

Hindu Religious Education

'The aim of life is the gradual revelation in our human existence of the eternal in us' (Tulasiewicz & To, 1993, p. 37). The goal of Hindu education is religious. 'The discovery of the spiritual at the heart of life was the aim of ancient Hindu education' (Husen and Postlethwaite, 1985, p. 2258). Hence, the Hindu teacher begins with the study of the sacred books—the *Vedas*—in order to alert the student to the hidden realm of the spirit and instruct him in the appropriate rituals and ceremonies. Only male children of the three higher or *Aryan* castes embarked on Vedic education. At the end of childhood, students moved in with their teachers in hermitages to be trained in simple living and in their ceremonial obligations. Hindus called this transition 'the second birth'. The school was the individual teacher (*guru*)—the classroom was usually his house. The *guru* possessed characteristics such as spirituality and other-worldliness, frugality, love of philosophy, language, and the sacred literature, skill at debate and public speaking, and devotion to students (Radice, 1998, p. 47).

Traditional Hindu education used oral methods to impart the sacred texts, accompanied by instruction in pronunciation, memorisation, metrics, grammar and finally, the practice of meditation. The *guru* wished to preserve the accurate tradition of the sacred books, as well as their meaning and understanding. Progress in learning was step-by-step. The stages were: first, listening to the teacher, then questioning and critical reflection, and finally, rational thought and meditation. Nineteenth century Hindu reformers developed religious education in direct competition with secular and missionary schools. Analysis of their schools reveals what Hindu thinkers considered non-negotiable and how they compromise with progress. Many avoid

explicit religious instruction—except for the teaching of the ancient Indian literature and epics. The diversity of Hindu popular religion makes it difficult to specify doctrine for instruction, so these modern Hindu schools often restrict themselves to the general philosophy of the Supreme Lord (*Brahman*), the caste system, respect for parents and the four stages and the four goals of life, reincarnation and *Karma* (Sutcliffe, 1984, p. 152).

In the Hindu school, secular learning seems secondary, though necessary, of course, to earn one's living. Vocational learning was specific to the caste: priests or warriors needed different skills from merchants or labourers. Hindu educators concentrate on personality development rather than cognitive learning. They inculcate character formation and service of the community rather than grasp of facts or attainment of qualifications. They advocate 'plain living with high thinking' (Chaube, 1965, p. 8). Descriptions of Hindu schools include many references to silence and prayer, exposure to nature and contemplation of the world, simple chores, tasks and crafts, self-discipline, and, a respectful and obedient relationship with the teacher.

Each of the four stages of life (*asramas*) has its own purpose: student, householder, retiree and renouncer (*sanyassin*). The celibate student has the duty of equipping the mind with the knowledge and insight to serve as a guide for life. The married householder undertakes the responsibility of supporting others, especially his family. The retiree can live a simpler, more frugal life, rejecting luxury and status. The renouncer cuts off all social ties to achieve liberation. Though few traverse all stages in one lifetime, the framework is an ascetical template by which devout Hindus can assess their moral progress. Hindu spiritual outlook always envisages different ways for different people in the moral and spiritual quest for happiness.

Outside the school, religious formation in the countryside takes place in the home and community, in myths passed on by elders, *pūja* or worship, rites of passage, temples and pilgrimages. Traditional Hindu religion involves rituals in every aspect of daily life. Rite and ceremony reveals the divinity in every moment. Hence, the role of worship (or cult) seems to be especially significant in Hindu religious education.

Buddhism

Buddhism is the child of Hinduism, nurtured in the bosom of India, then propagated throughout the sub-continent, and finally, spread far and wide throughout Asia. The new religion successfully crossed from one culture to another, but failed to establish a lasting foothold in its original home. One reason for its success abroad is its reliance on individual insight. Each Buddhist stands on his or her two feet. Accordingly, Buddhism and Buddhist religious education highlights individual Consciousness.

The Consciousness of one man is the origin of Buddhism. Siddhartha Gautama, a prince of Nepal, lost faith in the ability of Hindu devotion to attain happiness.

Hindu ritual or Hindu discipline did not work for him. After soul-searching, Siddhartha concluded that sorrow can be eliminated from human life, provided that the individual was aware of the role of suffering in life, recognised the cause of suffering, was confident that it could be removed, and embarked with tranquillity on the task of removing it. He called this the 'Middle Way', avoiding the laxity of ordinary life and the severity of the ascetic. His followers appreciated that Siddhartha had discovered the secret of contented existence, and so honoured him with the title of '*Buddha*' (the Enlightened One). Subsequently, he spent a long life travelling around India educating followers, and training associates, the monks and nuns of the *Sangha*, to carry on his work.

Buddhist World-View

Buddhism is about wisdom. Everyone has the ability to attain wisdom. In this quest, there is no hierarchy. Everyone is equal. There is an extraordinary lack of authoritarianism in Buddhism. Buddha himself did not appeal to any authority for what he taught, other than the authority of experience. He advises his followers to rely on their own judgment as well.

Nevertheless, the Buddha's teaching, the tradition passed on through the communities of monks, nuns and adherents, constitutes a rich religious heritage. The followers of the Buddha declare:

I take refuge in the Buddha,
I take refuge in the Dharma,
I take refuge in the Sangha.

Thus they acknowledge their confidence in the teaching of Guatama (*Buddha*), in the law, word and doctrine (*Dharma*) that he proposed, and in the community of dedicated persons (*Sangha*) who pass it on.

Buddha's teaching is simple and can be briefly stated. But the experience that validates the words is not so easily arrived at. The Buddha summarised his teaching in the Four Noble Truths: All life is sorrowful. There is a cause to the sorrow. There is a way to get rid of the cause of sorrow. The Eightfold Path is the way, a training regimen that takes the individual to the very roots of self-existence. It comprises wisdom, morality and contemplation, and though some of its precepts are common to other world religions, their purpose is unique to Buddhism, being directed to supporting individual consciousness of the truth.

For Buddha, desire, clinging, selfish attachment is the cause of all sorrow. This applies both to the obvious sorrow of the world experienced in every day living, and to the less obvious sorrow that attends our dependence, our contingency, and our profoundly accidental existence. Each being is a collection of random elements that will soon disintegrate leaving nothing behind. We can extinguish our longing for permanence and pleasure and power and presence, were we ever completely mindful, aware and conscious.

Buddhist Society and Culture

Buddhism is different in different countries. In some places, it faced competition. In others, it was quickly accepted and even achieved ascendancy. In its native India, for example, there were many debates and disputations between Hindu *Brahmins* and Buddhist teachers. This led to an apologetic and argumentative mode of Buddhism. In Sri Lanka, Thailand and Burma, Buddhism became the dominant religion. It was, and still is, the custom in Thailand for boys to become temporary monks for three months as part of their education. In countries of northern Asia such as China, where Buddhism faced a highly developed civilization with an alternative religious world-view, it adapted and reformed itself more radically. Buddhism developed the concept of the *Bhoddisatva*, the person who achieved liberation oneself, but postponed *Nirvana* until others would be liberated as well. In Japan, a distinctive form (*Zen*) emerged from the marriage of Buddhist insight with native culture.

Buddhism (like Hinduism) is not hopeful about effective social change. Changing the social system will not make any real difference. But Buddhists are hopeful about transforming the person; they believe that suffering can be eliminated from an individual's life. Accordingly, Buddhists rely on the community of monks and nuns (*Sangha*) to sustain discipline, support meditation and teach insight.

Nevertheless, the missionary character of Buddhism, whereby the new religion sought acceptance in the public life of a new host country, affected its approach to general education and secular training. With the introduction of public education systems, the Buddhist temples and monasteries often served as locations for schools. Sometimes the monks founded their own schools including secular learning as well as education in Buddhism. Given its strong egalitarian ethos, the Buddhist interest in popular education was a natural development. Though secular subjects were not as crucial to salvation as the Four Noble Truths, compassion demands that young people be given the education they need for this cycle of births.

Buddhist Religious Education

Buddhist religious education is based on the practice of the Buddha himself. He spent his life teaching, and left a legacy of story and legend about education. He was a superb teacher, by all accounts, and one can discern in the reports of his teaching many advanced pedagogical methods. He was acutely conscious of the individual differences of his students: on one occasion, he explained how a question was to be answered depending on the previous state of mind of the questioner. Some questions, he suggested, should not be answered at all, because the danger is that the student will be misled (Rahula, 1959, p. 64).

Buddhist religious education is about wisdom. The challenge for Buddhist education is the achievement on a communal scale what can be only accomplished on the individual level. A general problem for all education, it is a particularly acute for Buddhism because the Buddhist teacher is concerned, above all else, with individual Consciousness. Nothing else really matters or even exists. There are only Four Noble Truths and, to quote the words of John Keats: 'That is all ye know

on earth and all ye need to know.' All information, and any opinion, that is not reducible to the Four Noble Truths, is unnecessary. Buddhist education is centred on the monastery. The *Sangha* from an early date undertook the task of teaching boys. Unlike Hinduism, which relies on the individual *guru*, Buddhism organised schools. The monks also trained itinerant teachers and missionaries, and of course, new members for induction into the monastic community itself. Buddhist educational institutions were very highly thought of in ancient times. Students came to India in the fifth and seventh centuries C.E. for a Buddhist education at Patna and Nalanda, and left detailed accounts of their experiences.

Individual tuition was the norm in Buddhist schools, group instruction being a later development. The goal for Buddhist formation is the development of personal Consciousness, and so the teacher pays close attention to the individuality of the student. As in Hindu education, oral instruction holds pride of place, with memorisation, questioning and analysis. But because teaching and debating were so important for Buddhist missionaries, argument and discussion came to play an important role, and the training in debating has continued to this day in parts of the Buddhist world. An important component of the monastic regimen is withdrawal from ordinary life, and the severing of family and social ties, if only for a period. Both teachers and pupils have clearly defined duties and they live together in mutual respect. The common life of the monastery provides spiritual and temporal support and this enables full commitment to meditation with the hope of achieving enlightenment.

Buddhism rejects castes, hierarchy, and elitism. Anyone can attain to wisdom and enlightenment. Buddhism also turns away from the stern bodily discipline typical of Indian asceticism. These are in line with Siddhartha's original insight. In a Buddhist school, the character is being educated, rather than knowledge being acquired: Buddhist education leads to moral improvement, intellectual independence and mental discipline. Completely detached, free and autonomous, the student can face fleeting existence with equanimity in full mindfulness. Thus Buddhist religious education is about personal awareness or Consciousness.

Confucian Religion

The sage Kung Fu Tzu—Kung the Teacher—(rendered in Latin as *Confucius*) lived in 5th century B.C.E. China. The story of his life is obscure, but he seems to have worked as a manager before he turned to learning. Some say that he even served as a government minister in his native province of Lu. After his studies, he proposed a formula to restore the nation to a simpler and more just way of life. He claimed that these ideas were not original to him but were a recovery of the wisdom of the ancients. He travelled from State to State throughout China, looking for a municipality or government willing to implement his ideas. He failed to find any so progressive. Confucius, however, did educate seventy two disciples, committed his teaching to writing, and succeeded in founding the school of thought which bears his name. Confucianism has lasted for over two thousand years, during

which time it became the official philosophy of the Chinese empire, and profoundly effected the largest civilization on the planet. It has been extraordinarily resilient, accommodating each of the great religions that came to China, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, and, even to a degree, coexisting with Communism.

Confucian World-View

Though Confucius did not claim revelation or inspiration, he did respond to people's yearning for eternal life and personal comfort. He taught that both could be achieved on earth rather than in the afterlife. Immortality is available in two ways: survival of the family line through male descendents, and commemoration in the thoughts and words of posterity. For Confucians, these values are at the heart of history, close to the needs of people, and relevant to the tasks of government. What is more, they are mandated by the will of Heaven—a transcendental influence that, if not personal, is certainly benign.

The core of Confucian thought is *Jen*, translated as 'humane virtue' embracing a fundamental respect for human dignity. Contributing to *Jen* is *Li* or 'adherence to moral rule and ritual obligation' ensuring that the patterns for community living are appropriately maintained. *Chun Tzu* 'the ideal man or superior person' is the product of Confucian formation. In the Confucian State, government does not need to rule by force, but by the power of moral example (*Te*) expressed in the 'arts of peace' (*Wen*) (Smith, 1991, p. 172–180). The five great relationships of Chinese society are thus preserved in harmony: that of parent and child, husband and wife, brothers and siblings, elders and young, and rulers and ruled.

Confucianism is 'an extensive philosophical system of cultural and social ideals, political principles, moral codes and educational theories' (Tulasiewicz & To, 1993, p. 79). Like Buddhism it does not believe in supernatural beings. Yet it plays a religious role, and its principles are justified by religious belief. It would be an error to judge Confucianism as purely secular. Ancestor worship and the will of Heaven is an acknowledgement of a transcendent realm. Preserving the link with previous and subsequent generations is necessary for a peaceful social order. Where right relationships and good order prevail, people have physical security and spiritual confidence. Human relationships include more than present members of society, but extend far and wide in the community and beyond. The ancestors are the focus for Confucian ceremony. A relationship with them is the reason for filial piety, and the loyalty that holds person, family, State and universe together. The wisdom of many centuries is recorded in the rites and rituals, proverbial sayings and traditional customs, in the stories of past heroes and the advice of present sages.

Confucian Society and Culture

Confucianism, therefore, shows us religion in its social and moral effects rather than in its metaphysical and theological aspects. Accordingly, it may be described in sociological terms, as a 'civil religion'. Confucianism was the official religion

of China for over two thousand years. It permeated every aspect of Chinese life; Confucian books and ideas formed the content of Chinese education at all levels of the school system. Confucianism also influenced Japan and Korea, and other Asian countries such as Singapore and Taiwan. Confucian teaching about the relationship between private conduct and public business provided a coherent philosophy that commended itself to various regimes. Confucian thought is highly optimistic about society. In fact, it is convinced that the ills of society can be cured through moral education. For Confucius, human nature is fundamentally good, but can be corrupted by bad example, weak teaching and external temptation. The aim of Confucian education is to form citizens of the nation, servants of the State, heirs to the family, balanced individuals, superior people who act at all times with honesty and integrity and a deep sense of humanity. The role of government is to ensure harmony among the people, their ancestors and their posterity, and to assist the family to bring up children in peace and diligence. Hence, education was a key influence and essential condition for a successful society. Knowledge, social practice, religious ceremonial, good example, edifying stories, and moral training lead to personal loyalty, family harmony, energy in work and honesty in public relationships. Rites and ceremonies are particularly powerful agents in the inculcation of virtuous attitudes and ethical habits in the young, and their maintenance in society at large.

Traditional Confucian education was pragmatic and conservative, limited in objective, and straightforward in operation. It was not utopian or revolutionary or radical or idealistic. It thrived in two settings: government sponsored academies to train students for public service, or private schools intended for common people to achieve literacy. It was also meritocratic—that is, it was a system organised to select the most suitable candidates for high office in the State. The emphasis was on precise training rather than original thought. Teaching was highly didactic, relying on the transfer of a vast amount of knowledge rather than comprehension or analysis. The other focus was moral strength, producing the kind of person who showed the finer sensitivities, in dedication to one's duties, in appreciation of culture, and in devotion to society.

Confucian Religious Education

The opening sentence of the *Great Learning*, one of the Confucian scriptures, provides a succinct explanation of Confucian educational philosophy:

The Ancients, who wished to illustrate virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own States. Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge (Tulasiewicz & To, 1993, p. 79).

The quotation specifies the role of government, family, individual and intellect in Confucian educational practice. Confucianism is optimistic and hopeful about human effort and good faith in matters relating to the common good. It assumes, for example, student motivation, believing as it does in innate human goodness. It accepts ignorance and impiety as the sources of moral failure, both removable through education and ceremony. Religious education and moral education are seen to be the same. Personal destiny and social progress are both subject to determined study, sustained discipline and devotion to excellence.

In ancient Confucian education, the pupil began early, at the age of three, learning Chinese written characters with the mother or the nurse as tutor. The text used was *The Three Character Classic* (the oldest surviving current school textbook in the world). These childhood studies inculcated Confucian morals: a child needed education because human beings turned bad if they were not sufficiently learned. Then the student, seven or eight years old, literate in Chinese, could progress to the 'Four Books', namely, the *Analects*, a selection of Confucius' proverbs, the *Book of Mencius*, whose author was a student of Confucius' grandson, the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and then the 'Five Classics', including the *Book of History*, the *Book of Odes*, the *Book of Changes*, the *Book of Rites* and the *Annals of Spring and Autumn* (Cleverley, 1991, pp. 13–16). This schooling took the scholar to fifteen years of age, at which point, he embarked on the public examinations. These were held in turn on a local, regional, and national basis, the most ancient competitive public examination system in the world. As a student qualified at the successive levels, he became eligible for promotion in the civil service, moving from office to office up the line. Status and privilege in Chinese society revolved around progress in the examinations from the seventh century C.E. to 1905.

Confucian education cedes to none in its esteem for teachers and its regard for learning, and this respect for educators and education survives among contemporary Asian students. It is notable, however, that the educational weight falls upon the written, rather than the spoken, word. Chinese writing is a graphic, not a phonetic language, and the script bears no relationship to the language as spoken. This has a bearing on Confucian education. There is much emphasis on memorisation and formal knowledge, and less on discussion, rhetoric and conversation. The commitment to attain a high standard of literacy produces erudite scholars. It also produces a stable civilization and culture. The relationships between the various strata of society are established through many centuries, expressed in formal proprieties, conventional attitudes and traditional patterns of activity. We may contrast Confucian with Western education on this point.

Confucian education is based on socialisation, in which traditional ways are intentionally invoked and deliberately transmitted to the new generation. Rites and ceremonies play an important part in Confucianism, but their function is social rather than personal, with the intention of inculcating piety and loyalty. Thus they serve the collective good rather than individual religiosity. Secular learning, such as history, poetry, philosophy, music, politics and archery play a part in traditional Confucian education, because these disciplines are necessary to achieve

the peace and prosperity of the realm. Confucianism is the classic civil religion, and Confucian religious and general education is concerned to support the pillars of public culture and civilization. Thus it is fair to describe Confucian religious education as concerned with Culture rather than Consciousness or Cult.

Judaism

The names for a people are instructive. First of all, they are Hebrews, nomads on the fringes of the great river valley civilizations of the ancient world. Then they are Israel, a nation of twelve tribes, descended from the sons of Jacob, with a long history and a great destiny. Finally, they are Jews, people from the province of Judea, identified by the territory they regarded as theirs, but in bitter conflict with their neighbours for over two thousand years. The Biblical story can be so familiar that we may easily miss its contours. Jews believe that God made them a people, centuries ago, rescued them from slavery, formed them into a nation, taught them laws and ways to live, and promised them a land and posterity. As a matter of historical fact, however, they enjoyed uninterrupted possession of the land of Israel only during the reigns of David and Solomon, that is, for less than one hundred years. Since then they have been enduring internal division or external invasion. But through it all, Jews are sustained by their extraordinarily confident familiarity with God. Theirs is a community of memory, passing on the tradition of God's word and will, from generation to generation.

Jewish World-View

The Biblical experience of Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets shapes the Jewish religious world-view. Abraham first encounters the Creative Presence in the Universe as a knowing and caring being. Then Moses discovers that this Creative Presence intervenes effectively in history and looks for an intimate relationship with humanity. The reigns of David, and his son Solomon, afford a glimpse of what God wants for Israel. Finally, the prophets discern that God is passionate about justice and peace.

Jewish religion is revelatory and progressive. God discloses the divine personality to human beings through the Word of scripture and the Work of the world. The Jewish Bible explains God's will. Israel's history expresses God's concern (Tulasiewicz & To, 1993, p. 55). For Judaism, religion and morality are combined. An ethical imperative is at the root of creation. God liberates his people from oppression so that they can choose their own path to a better life. Even in the face of failure, God does not give up. The prophetic message is that God brings good out of evil. Jewish prophecy progresses from prediction of evil to anticipation of exodus. It does not foresee a dismal future. It expects a bright new world. The prophets anticipate that God will, in God's own time, inaugurate a permanent era of justice and peace. Jewish religion is also practical. It takes into account the weaknesses of human nature, the probabilities of error, and the certainties of malice. Judaism

provides a set of rules, covering all aspects of daily living, intended to remind people of the power of God, the demands on human beings, and the values at the heart of creation. The rules of Jewish living recall the love and power of God, God's choice of the Jewish people, the ebb and flow of Israelite history, and the vision of a world built on justice and peace. The Jewish people (*Qahal*) is entrusted with a special relationship with God: 'You are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth' (Deuteronomy 7:16). Therefore, of all the elements that comprise religious life, Judaism is principally concerned with Community.

Jewish Society and Culture

As God had promised posterity and land to the ancestral Patriarchs, the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. precipitated a crisis. Rabbinic re-evaluation concentrated on the faithfulness to the Biblical law, transmission of the Hebrew language and preservation of Jewish tradition in the place of land and Temple. Jews of the Diaspora (those living outside Palestine) could continue to be a holy people if they kept ethnic separation, spoke their language, retained their traditional practices, and discharged their Biblical (*Torah*) obligations. Even in exile, Jews could remember the Temple and the Land of Israel in ceremonies and rituals at home, in their private houses, synagogues and villages.

Judaism in different places differed according to the degree of adaptation to the host culture pursued by the local Jewish community. The Enlightenment and the political emancipation of Jews in European countries brought increased pressure on traditional Jewish communities to adopt the language, dress and customs of their host nations. Jews who moved to America confronted an open, democratic, and neutral society that encouraged Jewish people towards a more complete assimilation. The opportunity of employment and full participation in public life, the break-up of family life, personal mobility, and the general decline of ethnic communities added pressure on traditional Jewish culture. The nineteenth century growth of nationalism in Europe led to the emergence of Zionism, a political Jewish nationalism. Zionism advocates a return to Israel and the restoration of the Jewish people to their ancestral homeland. Zionism is strongly aligned with modern political values, such as the right of national self-determination, the restoration of human rights, and sovereignty of the people, and so its national vision is not particularly religious. The tragedy of the Holocaust, naturally enough, sharpened anxiety, and the foundation of the State of Israel gave it a focus.

Jewish Religious Education

Rabbi Joshua ben Gamala established universal elementary education for Jewish boys as early as 64 C.E. This did not mean, of course, that there was no previous religious education (it occurred in the home) but the first formal intention to found

Jewish schools can be traced from this time (Landman, 1969, p. 630). Jewish elementary or primary schools were called *Hadarim* and secondary schools *Yeshivot*. They generally confined themselves to religious subjects, the Bible, the *Talmud*, and their interpretation. Jewish education is by tradition religious in purpose and content. With the destruction of the Temple signifying the loss of both national territory and religious centre, religious education filled the void for Jewish communities in exile. Through the centuries, however, some schools began including secular subjects in their curriculum, compromising between Jewish identity and assimilation with the aim of broader social integration. The stricter religious schools refused to accommodate. After the foundation of Israel in 1948, anxieties about religious and secular aspirations for the new State ensured that schooling was an area of contention. Different types of schools emerged: traditional religious schools, Jewish schools that teach religion and general subjects, and schools that teach Jewish material to serve a nationalist or ethnic or cultural ethos (Tulasiewicz & To, 1993, p. 61).

In the Diaspora (Jews living outside Israel), many Jewish children attend regular secular public schools. So Jewish religious education is often taught in part-time schools, paralleling Christian Sunday Schools. Such schools emphasise a sense of Jewish identity, particularly by teaching about Jewish culture, religious holidays and synagogue prayers. At ages eleven to thirteen, supplemental schooling includes the *Torah*, the reading of Hebrew, and preparation for the *bar mitzvah* or *bat mitzvah* (the ceremony of entry into adulthood). Out-of-school activities such as summer camps, preschools, tours to Israel and youth groups allow children to develop a sense of and commitment to Jewish culture and values (Cully & Cully, 1990, pp. 338–339).

Teaching and the role of teacher is a central value in Jewish culture (Singer, 1964, p. 42). The Bible and Talmudic literature frequently refer to education and its importance to the community: teachers are called ‘the city’s watchmen’ (Hastings, 1981, p. 195). The methodology of traditional Jewish education, as practised in the rabbinic schools, was the interpretation of sacred texts. Anything relevant for exegesis was regarded admissible, and the commentaries developed through the centuries were collected, preserved and transmitted to scholars of succeeding generations. Accordingly, secular learning could reflect God’s creation and action in the world and be valuable in the context of religious formation.

Education in schools for children is similar to adult learning. The *Aboth* Tractate (the Sayings of the Fathers) lays out the stages. ‘At five years old, [one is fit] for the Scripture, at ten years for the *Mishnah*, at thirteen, for [the fulfilling of] the commandments, at fifteen, for the *Talmud*, at eighteen, for the bride-chamber, at twenty, for pursuing [a calling]’ (Danby, 1933, p. 458). This instruction illustrates another aspect of Jewish religious education; it is parallel to training in prayer and observance. Induction into adult life, with the obligation of the commandments, and entering into marriage and career, is a crucial part of religious education. Education must emerge in practice; learning produces a good person for the community. Classic Jewish interpretation or exegesis suggests the significance of the individual’s understanding and response to the sacred text. Discussion and debate, clarification

and explanation, elaboration and application are all part of the process. A scholar comments: 'the propensity to argue and discuss has been highly developed over time and no statement stands without challenge and no student is expected simply to sit and accept' (Sutcliffe, 1984, p. 196). Accommodation to rationality and to culture is integral to Jewish religious education.

Religious education, then, for Jews involves immersion in Jewish experiences, awareness of Jewish identity, recollection of Jewish memories and participation in Jewish traditions and community life. It is noteworthy what institutions hold on to when under pressure to compromise. Jewish religious education retains the inculcation of Jewish identity as the core of what it tries to do. To be Jewish is to be a member of a Community.

Islam

Islam is the youngest, and fastest growing of the major world religions, having spread far from its Arabian origins, to Indonesia in the west, Nigeria and Morocco in the east, north into the Balkans, and by emigration and conversion, into traditionally Christian countries of Europe and America. About one in five of the world's population is Muslim, and one in five of the world's Muslims is Arab. Islam means 'obedience' or 'submission' and comes from the same root as the Arab word for peace *salaam*. 'Muslim' is the personal equivalent 'the one who obeys'. Obedience to God was the theme of the message brought by Muhammed the prophet from Mount Hira near Mecca in Arabia, on the 'night of power' in 610 C.E. The message was uncompromising but simple; the preaching of Muhammed was powerful and convincing; the effects were stunning and immediate. Arabia was converted within a century; the religion spread to neighbouring regions with extraordinary rapidity; and an impressive and inspiring Muslim civilization was established. Much of the origins of modern science and mathematics and the philosophical stimulus for the European Renaissance, can be credited to the scholars and academics of medieval Islam.

Muslim World-View

For the Muslim, there is an infinite gap between divine and human. God is transcendently superior to the world and humanity. He does not associate with His creatures, except by conveying his commands. Even then, God employs an angel as intermediary. Muhammed was a simple caravan driver in Mecca, who, on the 'night of power', received a personal revelation from God (*Allah*) through the Angel Gabriel. This was a reminder of the warnings that God had given in the past through previous messengers. They included the Jewish prophets and Jesus, but their warnings had been either corrupted or forgotten. Muhammed is the last messenger and greatest prophet, the bearer of the final warning to hear the word of God and obey His law.

Any human being can be Muslim. Indeed, every human being is born Muslim. A Muslim obeys only God, and acknowledges Muhammed as God's final prophet.

Human beings need no help from God to do this, other than to heed God's word. Though merciful and compassionate, God is also just and fair. Human beings will receive exact recompense for their actions, good or bad. Therefore, to know God's will is crucial for salvation. Humans can know the will of God through intellect and intuition, or through visions, dreams and mystical experiences, but the most perfect way is through knowing the word revealed to Muhammed on Mount Hira, as recorded in the *Qur'an* and interpreted by the traditions (*Hadith*) from Muhammed's own time.

Fulfilment of the will of God is the sign of the religious Muslim. Compliance to *Sharia*—Muslim law—is the sign of a Muslim society. The Five Pillars express the duties of the Muslim: the Creed ('There is no God but God, and Muhammed is His Prophet'), Prayer five times a day, the Levy for the poor, the Fast at the month of Ramadan, and the once-a-life-time Pilgrimage to Mecca. Worship and belief are both equally subsumed into the list of duties to be fulfilled by the loyal Muslim. Islam is clear that the dominant element in religion is law, obedience or Code.

Muslim Society and Culture

The *Qur'an* records God's word as communicated to Muhammed, and so is sacred and holy beyond every worldly reality. A tension arises between the wisdom provided by the *Qur'an* and the traditions of the Prophet as against other sources of knowledge, such as experience, reason and mysticism. Various approaches to the problem of knowledge were disputed in medieval Islam. There was a rationalism inspired by Greek philosophers, and a theology that leaned towards mysticism and, between them, much energetic debate. By the end of the medieval period, Islam had largely abandoned rational philosophy for religious practice, personal devotion, and legal interpretation.

Islam has a drive towards practical living and politics. Men and women should be brothers and sisters, and the community of the world's peoples ought to be unified, like the community of Muslims (*Umma*). Muslims want Islamic ideals to be supported by the State system and public order as well as practised in private life. Muhammed himself was a prophet and a statesman, an imam and an emir (Ward, 2000, p. 35). Given this inclination, it is no surprise to find that throughout history, Islam possesses different political stances in the different countries in which it flourishes. Three such stances are usually identified, each to be found in the contemporary world: fully secular States, such as Turkey; officially Islamic States such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan; and finally, States with a Muslim majority such as Indonesia, Nigeria, Algeria, Syria and Yemen.

These different political situations have given rise to major conflict and much instability, particularly where Muslims believe that national authorities fail to support religious values and institutions sufficiently. In recent times, from the late 1970s, there have been coups in a number of countries, attempted revolutions in others, and a high measure of international volatility and insecurity in all. Needless to remark, these disputes have implications for Muslim religious education.

The current strength of Islamic fundamentalism, for instance, arises from an interpretation of the Sharia law, occasioned by such a controversy, that is more literal than many other Muslims would endorse.

Muslim Religious Education

The *Qur'an* is written in Arabic. Accordingly, Muslims cannot, strictly speaking, translate it because, as the Italian proverb reminds us, translation is betrayal. An approved version in another language, for instance, must note in its title that it is only a paraphrase of the original. As Islam spread throughout the world, Muslims of many nations learned Arabic in order to be able to recite the sacred scriptures. Recitation of the *Qur'an* has been the most common and typical pedagogical method in Muslim religious education. The investment in time and energy to teach sufficient Arabic to a fifth of the world's population, that they could recite, or recognise, some of the sacred words must have been immense. The outcome of actually remembering verses seems to have been less important than commitment to the attempt. Muslim religious education is concerned with the formation of the person. The discipline of obedience and the drilling of common recitation plays a major part in that effort. The words of the *Qur'an* are God's words. The incantation of the syllables, understood or not understood, brings mind, body, spirit and heart close to the divine. A *Hadith* from the Prophet Muhammed states: 'The most excellent form of worship and devotion... is reciting the *Qur'an*' (Graham, 1989, p. 107). As a result of this educational concentration, the chanted language—its phrases, cadences and moods—has entered Muslim consciousness.

Education is a divine command; the first words revealed to Muhammed in the *Qur'an* are: 'Read (or proclaim), in the name of your God who created man out of a clot of blood, read (or proclaim), and the Lord is most bountiful who taught the use of the pen, taught man that which he knew not' (*Qur'an* 96, 1–5). We understand the translation of 'read or proclaim' when we realise that until comparatively recent times, there was no such thing as private and silent reading.

The classic institutions of Muslim religious education are the *kuttab* (elementary school) and the *madrasah* (secondary school and higher education). In Arabia, the *kuttab* predates Islam. The core of the curriculum was the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*, but the elements of reading, writing and counting were added because of its origin. Another subject often taught, oddly enough, was swimming, though not in Arabia, for obvious reasons. Educators speculate that this subject was a result of Greek influence. The *kuttab*, as it spread through the Muslim world, made a major contribution to literacy. The *madrasah* came later, with a broader curriculum, which included astronomy, medicine and the sciences. It flourished in the golden age of medieval Islam, and developed into esteemed universities in major cities. Other kinds of schools were more informal or more local or more specialised, but according to interpretations of Muslim history, no less significant. These included the study circle, the mosque school, the palace school and the bookshop discussion group (Tulasiewicz & To, 1993, p. 147).

The imposition of Western style schooling in some Muslim countries in modern times, either imposed by colonial administration, or copied by Muslim governments trying to match foreign technology, challenged Islamic educational practice (Sarwar, 2003, p. 7). Though Islam has more energetically confronted secularism in education than other world religions, Muslim educational commentators blame the separation of revealed and acquired knowledge, and the isolation of pedagogy from philosophy, for impoverishing Muslim learning. In particular, the concentration of Muslim religious education on deed rather than idea, as one scholar put it, left Islam unready to meet the Enlightenment. Therefore, a movement is under way to 'Islamicise knowledge' to formulate an integrated and contemporary interpretation of the sciences and humanities in the context of the Muslim world-view (Esposito, 1995, p. 407).

For Muslim education, then, secular learning is subordinate to revealed knowledge. The primary obligation of the human being is to listen and obey, submitting every human concern to God, and carrying out the commands of God in everyday life. Hence Muslim religious education emphasises the behavioural or Code aspect of religion.

Conclusion

Categorisation of the major world faiths under six religious elements of cult, consciousness, culture, community, code and creed is an exercise in labelling. Such a tactic is rough and ready, based on external viewpoints, and risks doing injustice to the religion being examined. It is rough and ready, because religions involve more than one, or even two, of the elements. It is external, and that is particularly sensitive because the category in question may not be a concept even available in the religious thought to which it is being applied. Much more likely, though, is the possibility that the concepts have to be finely tuned for different religions. Accordingly, the caution must be sounded that if the application of these concepts is taken further than a heuristic device, an approach, or a way into the phenomenon of religious education, the inquirer may be seriously misled.

This approach, though, has the merit of being easily understood by religious educators. Different kinds of religious pedagogy have been identified as centred on the study of sacred scriptures, centred on theological issues, centred on progressing from 'lower' to 'higher' sciences, centred on experience, and centred on myth and ritual (Encyclopedia Britannica, p. 640). These are easily translated into the religious concepts suggested here. It has also the merit of leaving a category vacant and convenient for Christian religious education. Christianity appears to have emphasised, some would say too much, the creedal or cognitive aspect of pedagogy. Rationality is certainly central to Christian learning, and Christian European educational history has taken a quite different road to Jewish and Muslim education. The contrast with Eastern Religion is even more marked. Whether or not the categories suggested here fit other religious pedagogies with the appropriateness with which

Creed fits Christianity, will surely be a matter for discussion. That, of course, is the idea.

Further, a difficulty has been the different levels of religious education in all the major religions. At least four have been identified: the catechetical, or initial teaching in religion for the new adherent; the seminary, or advanced education and training for the adept or the professional; the church, mosque, or specialised religious school for the devout faithful and their children; and the school administered by religious but teaching general subjects and vocational training (Tulasiewicz & To, 1993, p. 14). The discussion has had to navigate through these levels, trying to draw from each, the general themes in the religious pedagogy in each tradition.

Finally, this article is based on the premise that the world-view, that is, the philosophical, theological and spiritual ideas in each religion, and the culture, social organisation and political framework in which different religious populations have found themselves, will have a decisive influence on the way religious people will teach religion in schools. This in itself embodies a sociological, psychological, philosophical and theological bias with which readers may not necessarily agree.

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FAITH SCHOOLS: A CULTURE WITHIN A CULTURE IN A CHANGING WORLD

John Sullivan

Liverpool Hope University

Introduction

I make several assumptions for the purpose of this essay. First, faith schools are no longer the default model of education; they offer an alternative to some contrasting system of schools that is dominated by secular principles; as such they operate as a minority group within any particular culture (even if a large minority in some cases). Second, they function with the permission of, and often with considerable support from, the State; they are not clandestine; they operate in the public domain. Third, with varying degrees of explicitness, confidence and success, they seek to reflect a particular religious worldview in the way they are organised, in what they teach and in the integration of faith and learning. Fourth, they aim to serve the common good by ensuring standards of education commensurate with those provided in mainstream schooling and to comply with a host of regulations and requirements laid down by government; hence they enjoy the permission and/or support mentioned in my second assumption. Fifth, I restrict my comments to schools that are linked to the main world faiths, that is, to those that have historical longevity, geographical extension, highly developed internal structures and sophisticated traditions of theology, self-reflection and critique. Nor do I refer here to supplementary or part-time faith schools, nor to schools set up by very local religious groups who lack connections with faith communities beyond their immediate area. Sixth, the existence of faith schools is controversial, not only with non-believers, but also among believers. Thus, some religious believers support the existence of faith schools, while others do not. Some non-believers support the existence of faith schools, while others do not. Even when enjoying apparent success and popularity in any particular setting, their place in the public life of a nation cannot be considered settled, secure or free from criticism.

In what follows, I first focus on the dual identity of faith schools and the double allegiance – to religious fidelity and to professional standards – of those who work in

such schools. Then I indicate the need for attention to be given both to identity and to otherness, so that distinctiveness in faith education leads to inclusivity rather than to exclusiveness. Third, I take into account the competing claims and the variety of interpretations and positions adopted in relation to the role of faith schools. Finally, I explore the interface between internal and external perspectives on the relation between faith schools and the culture in which they are located.

Dual Identity

Faith schools have a dual identity: they are simultaneously part of a religious community and also belong to a wider system of education. Their mission is, to a large degree, given in advance by the faith community that sponsors them, whether this community is Christian, Muslim, Jewish or another religious group. It will include conveying those elements of the religious tradition that are seen as central. Included in those elements, depending on the faith community in question, there may well be particular ways of thinking, of behaving, of belonging and of worshipping. Cumulatively, an induction into these ways comprises a religious formation. Oversight of faith schools by their sponsoring religious communities seems to display a whole spectrum of degrees of affiliation, ownership and direction. At one end of this spectrum there might be very tight prescription of who can be admitted as students, who can be employed as teachers and leaders, how the school is governed and by whom, the content of what is to be taught and the degree to which the whole ethos of the school mirrors the ideals of personhood, community, fidelity and discipleship that are aspired to by the faith community. At the other end of the spectrum there is considerable laxity about these matters and connections with the faith community are much looser, perhaps even quite ephemeral. Faith schools differ in the pattern of what they insist upon, encourage, permit, tolerate, disapprove of, and prohibit. Answers to questions about how close a faith school should be to its faith community are affected by many factors, not least of which in importance must be included how the faith community sees itself in relation to the world as a whole, how it envisages the role of education in general and of education in matters of faith in particular, and how positively or negatively the wider society views the faith community.

At the same time, however, this mission is not unconstrained: for faith schools are obliged to take into account a range of expectations and requirements imposed on them by the wider society. These might include constraints in relation to funding, to qualifications of staff, to curriculum, to educational standards, to equal opportunities, to the provision of publicly available information. Inevitably faith schools will experience these expectations in differing ways: some will resent them as intrusive and inhibiting, perhaps even corrosive and debilitating, while others will feel largely free to pursue their own agenda, perhaps even facilitated and supported in this by local and national governments.

Teachers in such schools are required to be bifocal in their aims and bilingual in the way they communicate – addressing both religious and professional concerns

(Sullivan, 2003). In a sense they function as elders within the religious community, trusted to embody, proclaim and facilitate the more abundant life as seen from within that religious community. They are expected to uphold the religious mission of the school and to demonstrate familiarity and ease in using its language, even if at times their commitment also entails the responsibility to critique its assumptions, priorities or practices. As teachers in a faith school they can be expected to give an account of how this context impinges upon their work as educators. It would not be surprising if having a faith commitment that harmonises with the principal commitments of the school stood them in good stead, and conversely, feeling uncomfortable with the ethos of that faith community, meant some degree of professional discomfort in working in a school linked to such a community. They are to be mindful of their duties in *this* particular school.

Yet, in the main, teachers would not have been eligible for a teaching post at all unless they had demonstrated academic qualifications and professional competencies that met national standards. Many teachers in faith schools have received their own academic and professional education and training in State institutions of higher education; they indwell many of the same perspectives about education, they express themselves in much the same vocabulary and they deploy a similar logical geography as their colleagues in mainstream, public or community schools. They will maintain contacts with colleagues from outside the faith school sector, for example, as part of a network of teachers with similar curriculum responsibilities, or with similar leadership roles, or in professional association or union activities aimed at safeguarding their conditions of service. Some will work, at different times in their career, both in faith schools and in mainstream schools, carrying with them at least vestiges of the other system in their practices and perspectives. It is difficult to isolate oneself entirely from the concerns, priorities, and problems of fellow professionals; indeed, part of what is meant by being a professional teacher is that one operates with a system-wide, not just a school-specific, view of education. Teachers have to be mindful of factors that contribute to the educational health of the nation, not just their own school.

Identity and Otherness

At the same time, teachers in faith schools are preparing their students to enter a pluralist world, one with people from many different races, cultures, political persuasions and religious allegiances. The preparation of students for life, work and citizenship in pluralist societies will require of teachers a capacity to promote among these students a universal perspective, one that is open and inclusive, that facilitates constructive dialogue and engagement with those of a different persuasion from oneself, and a concern for the common good. Therefore, however well they provide a religiously inspired ethos, one that truly reflects the specific mission of their faith school, teachers must always be ready to demonstrate the links between that ethos and mission and the more general educational, social, economic, political and cultural concerns and needs of the wider communities to which they belong—and to

which they are accountable. Distinctiveness, then, although a legitimate feature of a faith school, is not to lead to it being isolated, exclusive, elitist, or inward-looking.

In seeking to combine distinctiveness with inclusivity, faith schools have to preserve borders and to build bridges: there is both a protective and an outreach dimension to their work. They cannot be distinctive without ruling out priorities and practices that conflict radically with their *raison d'être*, undermine their mission or destroy their ethos (on the challenge posed by striving to combine being distinctive with being inclusive, see Sullivan, 2001). Those in leadership positions in particular are expected to develop a school climate that is hospitable to those qualities and practices that are central to the religious faith, such as private prayer, public worship, the reverent reading of sacred scriptures, the celebration of key moments in the history of the faith community, building links with the sponsoring faith community, both locally and beyond, and articulating the potential bearing of the faith perspective on how the curriculum (as a whole and in its parts) is understood, how pedagogy and assessment are conducted, and how education relates to life and to community. A faith school should provide a safe space in which the religious tradition can be encountered, expressed, witnessed to and lived out, without embarrassment or undue self-consciousness. Yet, at the same time, it should also provide a safe space in which it is possible to question the meaning, significance, coherence, adequacy, comprehensiveness, consistency, relevance and applicability of the faith tradition and to compare its teachings and practices with those of other world-views, without this questioning being taken as necessarily an indication of lack of commitment, of weak faith, of disloyalty or of inadequate understanding. A faith school is one where students learn to think about the faith tradition in depth; such depth can only be met over time, through prolonged exposure. In a faith school, the religion is encountered on its own terms, rather than merely as an object to be looked at through secular spectacles. In such a school, pupils learn to 'see with eyes that are not dazzled by the images presented to them by the wider society' (Glenn, 2000, p. 261). A practically oriented, detailed and systematic outline of how faith school leaders might seek to construct, maintain and develop an appropriate culture has recently been provided by Timothy Cook (Cook, 2001). In this manual for school leaders, attention is given to core beliefs and values, heroes and heroines, symbols and rituals, history, modes of communication and the key cultural players.

Faith schools of all kinds seek to assist their students in coming to know themselves better, in coming to know God (who is the transcendent focus of religion), in coming to know the faith community (which involves familiarity with its past as well as with its present) and knowing the wider world, including other communities. There is interaction between each of these four kinds of knowledge, for faith and learning are to be integrated, not just juxtaposed. Thus, according to a faith perspective, I only come to know myself in the light of my knowledge about God, through my participation as a member of a faith community, and via engagement with the wider (external to faith) community. There will be tensions, which can be either creative or disabling, (and frequently a mixture of each), between, on the one hand, my sense of identity—as an individual and as a member

of a faith community—and, on the other hand, my encounter with otherness and plurality. When I meet those who are different from me and different from those with whom I normally associate myself, I come to see myself and my group in a new light. But without a fairly well developed sense of ‘who I am’ and ‘to whom I belong’ I do not bring much to that encounter and am the less likely to derive much benefit from it.

The encounter and tension between identity and otherness can be described in terms of an alternative polarity: between, on the one hand, indwelling and, on the other hand, the process of externalising oneself in dialogue, questioning and engagement. Faith schools provide a safe context for students and teachers to remain ‘under the umbrella’ of a particular living tradition, to spend an extended period of time thinking according to its conceptual categories, evaluating experiences from its vantage point, looking out at the world from a particular angle, familiarising themselves with a particular story, internalising a set of practices, rehearsing the rules of belonging to a particular community, letting the ‘tools’ or ‘resources’ provided by a religious way of life become, at least for a while, extensions of themselves in their attentiveness, experiences, judgements and decisions. This is indwelling. Indwelling involves not just looking *at* the faith tradition, but looking *from* this at the world. One is not just teaching about a tradition, but also teaching students to live it out. Indwelling implies that the various aspects or elements within a faith tradition are not seen as a collection of separate items but rather as belonging together in an organic unity. Here the meaning of the parts is not accessed except in relation to their connection with the whole. But if the indwelling is to be intelligent, reflected upon, informed and capable of withstanding critical reflection, it must be enriched by opportunities for dialogue about and with the other, for hearing and raising questions about what has been received, for joint activity with those who see things differently. In short, the culture of a faith school cannot be purely inward-looking. This would be to limit both its self-understanding and its knowledge of and impact on the world.

Competing Voices

There are competing claims in faith schools. Children, parents, religious bodies and the State all have vested, yet different, interests in what goes on in them. Faith schools find themselves in the middle of three overlapping circles. First, to be effective, they must be communities in their own right, sharing a life together, for part of each day, with mutual expectations, clear rules, suitable boundaries, common assumptions and opportunities for each member to participate and take ownership of the goods being pursued there. Second, they form part of the faith community, although sometimes they find themselves an integral part and sometimes very much on the periphery of that community. Third, they belong to the secular community, with parents and teachers paying taxes, voting for local and national politicians, and enjoying the benefits and burdens of citizenship. Students are expected, both by the State and by the faith community, to be equipped to participate in the economy, to

contribute to this wider community, to abide by its laws, to engage in its culture. As they venture out from home, onto the street, and then into school (and, for some, into the faith community), and as they move back and forth between the different selves they encounter and express throughout a school day, students find themselves negotiating a range of conflicting expectations. Domestic demands, participating in secular culture, fitting in with school requirements—each of these can clash with the norms put forward by faith communities. A powerful exploration of these issues is provided by Peter McLaren (McLaren, 1993).

There is a great variety of interpretations of the tradition. Essentially faith communities are communities of argument (Tanner, 1997, pp. 123–5, 154, 174). This means that what is taken to be the essential features of a Catholic, Anglican, or other Christian school, or of a Jewish or Muslim school, might well be described in significantly different ways. These differences stem partly from different historical legacies in different contexts, from differing current external threats and opportunities for the faith schools, as well as from disagreements that arise internally over the central teachings and practices of the respective faith community. In one place great emphasis is placed on ensuring that students are thoroughly familiar with sacred scriptures; in another, that they regularly participate in acts of worship; in another that they can give a comprehensive account of the key doctrines of their faith community; in another, they are invited to live out their faith in a more public setting by acts of service, in another to restrict their relationships to those within the faith community, thereby strengthening their links with it. ‘Different contexts are sensitive to different aspects of the theological tradition’ (Sedmak, 2002, p. 55). Thus, many aspects of our cultural surroundings combine to modify our attitude to authority, our understanding of the nature of communication, our appreciation of what hinders and what assists learning, the balance we strike between the ‘horizontal’ (or social and communal) and the ‘vertical’ (or God-focused) dimensions of religion. As Sedmak says (2002, p. 80): ‘Doing theology takes place within the framework of a particular culture. This has an impact on the language we speak, the categories we use, the experiences we rely on, the problems we deal with, the assumptions we make.’ We find that our culture has already largely domesticated us into certain ways of thinking about what we eat, what we say, what we notice and what we value. Our culture has accustomed us to particular conceptions of time and space, of right and wrong, of health and sickness, of friend and foe.

However, having a common culture does not necessarily lead to uniformity of thinking or action. Even when they believe they are relying upon the same ‘score,’ musicians and dramatists can render this in markedly different ways. So too, even when there is substantial agreement within a faith school as to what the tradition is about, there can be markedly different expressions of how this is to be communicated, emphasised and applied. Some of this difference can be accounted for by real differences in their contexts and some really depends more upon how the faith tradition is understood and reconstructed by its adherents.

The dynamics and demographics of ownership of the school’s mission (Simon, 2003) will obviously play a big part in the degree to which fidelity is shown

to the faith tradition, which aspects are highlighted and which are downplayed. By the dynamics and demographics of ownership I mean simply: how many people within a school feel close and committed to, and how many feel distant or even alienated from, the mission? Where are these people placed in the school and what are their respective roles? How do they interact? Which voices dominate and which are suppressed? The dynamics and demographics of ownership make certain kinds of religious affiliation and witness more likely and others more difficult to achieve.

Interface Between Internal and External Perspectives

Consideration of the dynamics and demographics of the ownership of mission refers principally to human interactions internal to a school. Theologian Kathryn Tanner brings out very clearly how any particular cultural identity established by a community is formed in a process of ongoing modification by encounter with influences external to it; as these change, any internal balance that had been established has to be reviewed (Tanner, 1997, p. 36). ‘A process of resistance, appropriation, subversion and compromise’ occurs (Tanner, 1997, p. 58). Thus, faith schools will reject some features of their external environment as incompatible with their espoused ethos. They borrow other features and make them their own (which might mean they are interpreted differently inside the faith from the way they are seen from outside it). In other cases they engage with aspects of the surrounding culture, sometimes reluctantly, sometimes enthusiastically. In doing so, they display varying degrees of nuance in understanding of what they are borrowing and they influence the receiving culture either negatively or positively. Citizenship, technology and sex education can each be the focus of borrowing, negotiation and critique in a faith school.

It has to be remembered that religious believers rarely if ever inhabit only one cultural location. Usually they belong to more than one community and their religious identity does not exclude overlapping activities and membership (Tanner, 1997, p. 99; Sloane, 2003, p. 120). Through inter-marriage, through work, through mobility brought about for political, economic and social reasons, and through participation in their cultural environment they are never *just* religious believers; they are also students and teachers, parents and children, patients and carers, citizens and dissidents. Although religious believers spend part of their time in the faith community and much of their time outside this, ‘it is not the case that the former is religious and the latter is irreligious; better to say that the former is intraecclesial, and the latter is missionary’ (Lakeland, 2003, p. 69). Faith communities are rarely self-contained; nor are they self-sufficient. Their boundaries are fluid; their interactions with outsiders are constantly ones of borrowing, rejection, adjustment and accommodation. Loyalties will sometimes conflict. Such conflict can damage the confidence, both of individuals and of communities; but it can also prompt new insights, uncover contradictions and facilitate creative responses. The primary duty is not to be *different* but to be *faithful* (Sloane, 2003, p. 126), though sometimes this faithfulness will entail being different. ‘Like our unbelieving

brothers and sisters, we have one task: to make the world a more human reality. Like them, we can fail through fear or greed. Like us, they can succeed through courage and generosity' (Lakeland, 2003, p. 150).

Forming a culture within a culture in a changing world, faith schools are required to preserve identity but to do this in dialogue with the wider culture. This is so not only because without cooperation with outsiders they are unlikely to survive, but also because in its absence they will fail to contribute to and to influence the wider culture and thus will not deserve to survive. The kingdom of God is for spreading, not for hoarding; it is to be shared with others, not restricted to a religious elite, a privileged few. Just as governments need to avoid displaying either favouritism or outright hostility to any particular group, and thus must treat faith schools fairly, in the balance of ground-rules and resources, of constraint imposed and support provided, so faith schools should be ready for their claims, both about life as a whole and about education as a resource for that life, to be exposed and tested in the public arena. They need not be fearful for, 'at its best, religious discourse in public culture is not less dialogic—not less open-minded, not less deliberative—than is, at its best, secular discourse in public culture' (Perry, 2003, p. 42). In the dialogue with the wider culture what is needed is a sensitive and flexible blend of, on the one hand, conviction and courage and, on the other hand, of humility and openness. As Cardinal Bernardin claimed: 'A confident church will speak its mind, seek as a community to live its convictions, but leave space for others to speak to us, to help us grow from their perspective' (quoted by Perry, p. 129). In commenting on the role of religion in politics, Perry suggests (p. 129) that 'a sectarian mode of religious participation in politics is more likely, when successful in achieving its political objectives, to tear the bonds of political community than to strengthen them'. Of course, wisdom is required to know when to be unswerving and constant in upholding the faith tradition's (current) perspective and when to be ready to compromise and make concessions. This wisdom does not come only from within the resources of the faith tradition, though the treasury that inheres there must be drawn upon; it also comes from the insights and experiences of those external to the faith tradition. In Christian terms, grace and the workings of the Holy Spirit cannot be confined to any particular group.

The degree to which faith schools feel able to be open to and to enter into dialogue with the wider culture about issues of contention depends partly on how those within them envisage the life of faith itself, the function of doctrine, the nature of authority, and the way that God relates to us. However, it also depends significantly on the kinds of pressures and constraints imposed on them by external groups, not least governments. Conformity to government expectations can sometimes lead to loss of distinctiveness in ways that undermine the essential culture of faith schools (Glenn, 2000, pp. 40, 165, 188). For example, employment decisions are crucial for retaining the distinctive culture of a faith school. But certain kinds of regulations about teacher accreditation, as well as about recruitment and selection procedures, can make it more difficult for faith schools to maintain a critical mass of staff committed to a shared religious ethos (Glenn, 2000, pp. 191, 199).

Curriculum requirements for schools can make it difficult for the faith perspective to have any salience. Often the content of education and training for aspiring teachers in universities and colleges is tightly controlled and prescribed in detail by government; as a result this can leave insufficient scope for consideration of religion. If teachers are unable to secure employment without a government licence or approved qualification, then the healthy functioning of faith schools is put in jeopardy.

Hence there is debate and controversy, not only about the support for and constraints upon faith schools in a pluralist society, but also about the surrounding apparatus for this: initial teacher education, in-service training opportunities for teachers, leadership preparation, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and inspection. Each of these activities can be so managed that it undermines elements of faith schools that are integral to their nature, in particular the intellectual, professional and religious formation of teachers equipped to articulate and to exemplify a specific way of life. It must be admitted that association with like-minded others can lead to a herd mentality and thinking like a crowd. Here criticism is stifled and creativity is denied and a repressive and unthinking conformity is fostered: this should be guarded against. However, the kind of moral coherence needed for an effective school culture relies quite heavily on consistency of approach, common values, shared perceptions and jointly owned priorities. 'A school climate that does not rest upon openly discussed convictions is likely to be as passing as the weather, affected by a staff member's departure or a new government requirement' (Glenn, 2000, p. 262). Despite his championing the place of faith-based organisations within public culture, Glenn still believes that government interference is less threatening for them in the final analysis than self-betrayal (Glenn, pp. 241, 255).

Central to the mission of faith schools is the complex task of mediating between the culture of the sponsoring faith community, the particular culture of an individual school, and the wider culture surrounding that school. (On the intricacies of mediating the mission, see Sullivan (forthcoming) and, on the balancing acts required of leaders who seek to appropriate creatively different metaphors of schooling as part of the process of mediation between faith and culture, Sullivan, 2000). One might call this process of cultural mediation 'inculturation.' In Christian terms 'inculturation' is about relating the gospel to the ever-changing circumstances, vocabularies, categories of thought, practices, perceptions and existential concerns of particular groups of people at any point in time. Anthony (1999; 2000; 2003) has written extensively on how inculturation is conducted in faith school settings. He claims that 'the role of religiously affiliated schools in the inculturation process is determined by the cultural stand of their respective religious traditions and by the cultural context in which they are located' (Anthony, 2003, p. 17). With regard to their cultural stance one might ask of faith schools several questions about how their tradition relates to the wider culture. How married are they to earlier expressions of the tradition? How open are they to new expressions? How positive can they be about elements in the surrounding culture? Which aspects of this do they feel obliged to resist? Then, with regard to the cultural context in

which the faith school is situated, one can investigate how the faith tradition is perceived from within that context, what cultural space is made available to the faith tradition in the public arena and the degree of legitimacy granted to separate faith schools by society as a whole and by those exercising political authority in it.

According to the analysis provided by Anthony, the relationship between religion and culture - and therefore for the purposes of this chapter, between faith schools and their surrounding culture - is one that simultaneously displays several features. First, it is dynamic, that is, it is ongoing. At no point can we say that the relationship is fixed or frozen, either in a positive or a negative way. Second it is dialogical, that is, there is mutual appreciative acknowledgement, points of exchange and grateful borrowing. Third, it is diacritical, which means each 'party' reciprocally critiques the other. Faith schools must be open to external criticism where the education they provide is deficient in some respect. At the same time, they rightly offer a counter-cultural perspective on some aspects of education and life in the wider society. Fourth, there is dialectical correlation, that is, the cycle of interaction between faith schools and the surrounding culture leads to a creative synthesis (Anthony, 2003, p. 23), one that is richer than it would otherwise have been if each had operated in isolation from the other.

At any particular moment and in any particular location there will be much variation in the balance struck between the promotion of a distinctive culture within a faith school and the degree of accommodation or resistance to the culture that prevails outside of it. No formula is available that turns the task of establishing and maintaining a healthy balance into a predictable, measurable or smooth process. What is required, to give one a reasonable chance of doing justice to the faith school and to the wider culture, is a plumbing of the depths of each, an indwelling of and a critical appreciation and creative appropriation of the living tradition offered by the faith community, and a discerning yet positive engagement with the world beyond its boundaries. This is an endeavour that is risk-laden and demanding, complex and subtle, worthwhile and exciting.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SPACE: CHALLENGES AND CONTESTATIONS

Dr. Anne Looney

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Republic of Ireland

Introduction

The place and role of *education* in the public space is the subject of considerable attention in contemporary academic, policy and popular discourse. In the words of Michael Apple (2001), 'open season on education continues' (p. 1). The aims and purposes of education, and in particular of schooling, occupy legions of researchers, writers and policy makers alike, while education workers get on with the job of education. The latter task is made more complex by the seeming 'torrent of unwanted, uncoordinated policies and innovations raining down on them from hierarchical bureaucracies' (Fullan, 2001, p. 22). This torrent arises, in the main, from the contestation of the relationship between education and the public space, and debates over what education is supposed to achieve, and for whom. While Fullan's description relates to the situation in North America, it resonates with anyone working in the field of education in Europe, especially since the advent of what has come to be known as the Lisbon goals that aim to make Europe the world's leading knowledge economy by 2010, and the placing of education at the heart of this ambitious project.

Against this background, navigating between education and the public space becomes a complex task. The analysis offered by Michael Apple, especially his comments on maps of reality, is useful in this regard. Commenting on developments in the United States, Apple (2001) flags a movement to privatise education in what he suggests is an attempt to make very public statements about religion. According to Apple, the development of charter schools and State sponsored voucher systems is facilitating the redirection of the education system towards the promotion of a particular religious world-view. In an example of how the strands of debate about

the relationship between religion and education become enmeshed in other debates, he suggests that cultural struggles now at the heart of US education are about 'maps of reality':

For dominant groups to exercise leadership, large numbers of people must be convinced that the maps of reality circulated by those with the most economic, political and cultural power are indeed wiser than other alternatives. Dominant groups do this by attaching these maps to the elements of good sense that people have and by changing the very meaning of the key concepts and their accompanying structures of feeling that provide the centres of gravity for our hopes fears and dreams for our society (2001, p. 195).

In Apple's analysis, the power of these imagined communities, a nostalgic power, is increasingly pervasive. He suggests that when this nostalgic power connects with market forces, it can re-shape education and school systems.

It follows, given Fullen's comments on education and those of Apple on some of the forces operating in the education reform agenda, that any consideration of *religious education* in that contested landscape between education and the public space will be challenging. Mapping the terrain will be difficult. This paper claims no comprehensive cartography. As it was for the map-makers of ancient times, new territories are emerging all the time, new passages and pathways opening in the relationship between religious education and the public space. In the shifting space, only partial mapping is possible and existing maps may need interrogation and revision. The paper aims towards this partial mapping, drawing on a number of writers on religious education, education and public policy to map some new directions and to place religious education in the public space in the opening years of the 21st century. While religious education, as with all education, is a life-long process, the paper focuses in particular on the religious education of children and young people in schools. Other explorers and cartographers may take up the task of navigating the territory of adult religious education. Some of the work of this paper may be useful for that project.

The mapping here is based on three 'compass points'. The first is the consideration of the relationship between religion and education. The second is emerging consensus about religious education as an *educational* rather than a *religious* project. The third is the contribution that religious education might make to the contemporary—and very public—debates about teacher identity. The first of these 'compass points' is a global construct, the second and third are considerably more local, drawing on the experience of recent developments in religious education in the Republic of Ireland.

The mapping concludes with a look to the, as yet, uncharted territories of educational futures, to globalisation and the role of religious education in the knowledge society.

The Contested Relationship Between Religion and Education

Just as the public role of education is the focus of considerable contestation, in different manifestations, contestation of the relationship between religion and education is a feature of educational discourse in the opening years of the twenty-first century. This contestation is not confined to the academy or to researchers or policy-makers working in the fields of religion and education. Rather, it is a public contestation, an engagement of hearts and minds—and souls—on the issue of how religious belief and institutions should engage with, shape or participate in, the educational project within nations, and beyond. A brief overview of some strands of the debate captures its variety and complexity.

In the United States, debates about intelligent design, evolution, science and creationism are transferring from the school house to the court room in a very public re-run of the controversies of the early part of the twentieth century. The New York Times, for example, discussed the control of the State board of education in Kansas by opponents of evolution in an op-ed piece and noted that the debates were not confined to one State:

Proposals to modify the State's recommended science curriculum with alternatives to Darwinian evolution will be an issue at a State-wide public hearing scheduled in February. In Georgia last week, a federal judge ordered a suburban Atlanta school board to remove stickers labelling evolution 'a theory not a fact' from high school biology textbooks, but an appeal seems likely. Other States where the teaching of evolution is on the 2005 legislative or judicial calendar include Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania and South Carolina (Jacoby, 2005).

In August 2005, the President of the United States entered the debate by commenting at a press conference that intelligent design theories should be taught alongside evolution in schools. The Washington Post commented that:

his remarks heartened conservatives who have been asking school boards and legislatures to teach students that there are gaps in evolutionary theory and explain that life's complexity is evidence of a guiding hand (Baker, 2005).

In the United Kingdom, the contestation of the relationship between religion and education has been less about theology and more about ideology. The summer of 2005 saw an extended debate in the press and other media on the State funding of religious-run schools, generally referred to in England as faith schools. A. C. Grayling offered three reasons to the Times Educational Supplement (TES) of July 15th why faith schools were objectionable. The first was the case of Northern Ireland, where, he suggested, 'the segregation of Catholic and Protestant Pupils has been one of the major causes and sustainers of intercommunity tensions in that country' (Grayling, 2005). The second of Grayling's objections was what he termed the 'indoctrination of intellectually defenceless children'

that occurred, he claimed, in faith-based primary schools. His final criticism was that segregation, a consequence of faith schools, inevitably undermined national cohesion.

In August of that year, the debate gained a new dynamism and urgency following the terrorist attacks in London during July. The issue of State funding for Islamic schools was the particular focus of this new round of debate. Calling for an end to the State funding of all religious schools, one commentator concluded that 'faith schools may not promote suicide bombing, but they prepare its doctrinal building blocks. They have to go' (Mears, 2005). The pro-faith schools side claimed that 'Islamic-ethos schools are more effective than non-religious State schools in tackling the cultural isolation and resentment simmering in Muslim ghettos'. The TES reported in its next edition that the debate had spread to Australia:

State education ministers in Australia have ordered close scrutiny of Islamic schools following claims that some are teaching hatred of Western values to their students. Ministers have warned they will take action against any school where there is 'inappropriate teaching or antisocial behaviour' and that schools much teach traditional Australian values (Maslen, 2005).

It is clear that any discussion of religious education must take cognisance of these debates about the relationship between religion and education, especially those concerning the aims and purposes of schooling, and those fuelled by fear and suspicion. Arguably, religion in some of this discourse has become a proxy for something else—race, class, or privilege perhaps. Consider historian R. Laurence Moore's assertion that debates about religion are inevitably about power:

... whether we believe in God or Michel Foucault, we should acknowledge that power works in mysterious ways, especially in all matters that touch upon culture. If the test of a society's religiosity is whether churches typically oppose and confront other kinds of vested power solely for reasons of self-interest, then we are not going to find a religious society anywhere in Western time (1993, p. 65).

Also of note is the discussion by Walford (1995) of emerging equity issues in Dutch education where, he suggests, religion is becoming a proxy for ethnic grouping. He describes how the growing ethnic diversity in the Netherlands poses some challenges to the education system and to parents and families.

In particular, as the majority of ethnic minority children are enrolled in State schools, some private religious schools are seen as providing 'safe havens' for white pupils. They can perform this function because, although they cannot discriminate in admissions on the basis of ethnic origin, they can refuse entry to children on religious grounds (p. 74).

In much contemporary public debate about the relationship between religion and education the focus has been on conflict, and, in the case of debates in the UK

and Australia, on religious involvement in, or connection with, education, as being counter to the public good.

Kieran Scott works inside the relationship between religion and education, in the discipline of religious education, but he too sees the challenges in making somewhat more positive connections between religion and education. The project of attempting to bring the two together faces, he claims, 'formidable obstacles' (2005, p. 65). He identifies three challenges to any attempt to posit an intersection between religion and education. The first of these, he suggests, is that religion as a disposition does not lend itself to the 'dispassionate consideration' required of education. The second obstacle arises from the trajectory of education towards complexity and ambiguity and the insecurity of dialogue and search. This, argues Scott, does not sit well with the needs of the 'religious devotee' who 'seeks to be consoled, secured and rooted in ultimate certainty' (p. 66). The third obstacle is to be found in the nature of the modern school system, focused as Scott sees it, on the technical and the marketable. Religion and religious education, he would suggest, can find no place, and no sympathy, in the neo-liberal school reform agendas sweeping education in the developed world. Despite these obstacles, Scott concludes that religious education belongs in schools where religious literacy and the cultivation of religious understanding can and should be promoted.

John White, an educational philosopher working in the UK draws an entirely different set of conclusions. In England and Wales, religious education remains a compulsory part of the school curriculum in State schools despite what John White (2004) calls 'the clear evidence of increasing secularisation' (p. 152). He notes that before the 1988 curriculum reforms, religious education was the only compulsory subject. It was made compulsory in 1944 partly for civic and moral reasons. It is indeed notable that the current debate about religious education in schools comes at a time of considerable anxiety over citizenship, civic identity and moral values in the UK. White questions whether religious education ought to be the source of moral education in schools, as is suggested in much of the official curriculum publications on the issue. Better, he suggests to rely instead on citizenship education, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and school ethos to do this job. Using religious education as a vehicle for moral education, he asserts, should be avoided. Some parts of the educational project can be assigned a moral purpose, in his analysis, and others should be devoid of it. If religious education is to appear on the school curriculum at all as a separate subject, (White has no difficulty with the inclusion of religious subject matter in other areas of the curriculum) then he suggests that it should be considerably slimmed down from its current level of provision and confined to older students who may be better placed to deal with the arguments. For White, there is no philosophical justification for religious education in schools, certainly not with the status it currently enjoys in England.

In Spain, the issue has been political rather than philosophical. Recent debates about the socialist reform of education in Spain focused on the place and status of

religious education in the school curriculum. In November 2005 almost 2 million people protested in Madrid over the apparent downgrading of religious education in new education reforms proposed by the Zapatero government. The protestors claimed that by making religious instruction a non gradable subject that would not contribute to students total scores, the government was undermining the historical, social and moral importance of religion classes in primary and post-primary education (McLean, 2005).

Against this background, the challenge of mapping religious education in the public space becomes more acute. Inevitably bound up with these complex and multi-dimensional debates about religion and education, religious education, a process that has long suffered from identity crises, is at risk of being overwhelmed in the conceptual confusion and multiple discourses of the education and religion debate. The 'compass point' may place religious education in the public space between religion and education, but it also points to contestation of that space. As a locator it serves its purpose. For a navigational aid, we may need to look elsewhere.

Religious Education in the School Curriculum: The Case of the Republic of Ireland

The second 'compass point' offered in the attempt to place religious education in the public space at the beginning of the 21st century uses the school curriculum as its marker, particularly, the school curriculum in the Republic of Ireland. While the role of religious education in the social construction of the curriculum is always a source of, and focus for, contestation (as evidenced in the Spanish controversies) recent developments in Ireland make for a particularly interesting case study. There, the emergence of a new course of study for post-primary education re-positioned religious education as an *educational* rather than *religious* project, although the dual aims are not seen as mutually exclusive.

Cunnane offers a useful discussion of the movement towards religious education as an educational rather than a religious project. Referring to the multiple meanings of religious education as a 'babel of languages' (2004, p. 17), she notes the lack of academic research and theoretical scholarship in the field of religious education. She argues that such confusion of identity leads to confusion of purpose. A review of contemporary writings in the field leads her to identify two groups of purposes. The first of these is associated with religious socialisation, the formation of a person into a religious way of life, the second with the development of an understanding of religion. Cunnane is unhappy with either category. Instead, drawing on the work of Gabriel Moran, she advocates a more *educational* view of religious education. Recent developments in the Republic of Ireland have shown what an emerging model of such religious education might look like.

The Context for the Development

In January 1996, the editorial of the Irish Times commented on the final stages of the development of new syllabuses for religious education for lower and upper secondary school students:

Irish people tend to be portrayed as religious and the State is often seen as being dominated by religion. Yet, in tandem with an apparently deep interest in religious matters, there are some extraordinary anomalies. These include the fact that apart from Trinity College and the pontifical side of Maynooth, theology is not taught in Irish universities; and there is no study of religion in a formal, academic manner in Irish schools. These anomalies stem from a variety of sources including the university legislation, legal interpretation of the Constitutional ban on the State endowing religions and the 1878 Education Act which forbids State spending on the teaching of religion as an examination subject (02.01.1996).

The historical background to the legislative ‘anomalies’ flagged in the editorial is complex and has as much to do with colonialism (the 1878 legislation was drawn up by the British government) as it has to do with relationships between the State, religious institutions and the National University of Ireland. For the purposes of this paper, it is of note that the ban on the funding of an examination in religious education had, until the closing years of the 20th century, ensured that curriculum provision for religion in post-primary schools was a matter for the churches. This situation continues in Irish primary education—the revised Primary School Curriculum was introduced in 1999 with a brief reference in its introduction to the fact that while religious education has an important role to play in the holistic development of the child, curriculum provision for this aspect of school life is a matter for the various churches (Government of Ireland, 1999). The situation of religious education in primary schools is discussed more extensively below. However, in both primary and post-primary schools, teachers are paid by the State for the teaching of religion. In primary schools, for example, the preparation of the children for the sacraments in Catholic schools is done in school time as part of the Catholic catechetical programme. In post-primary schools, teachers of religious education—regardless of whether the school offers the new State syllabuses, or church devised programmes—are also paid by the State, although required for registration purposes to be teachers of other subjects in addition to religious education.

Throughout the nineteen seventies and eighties in the Republic of Ireland, there had been a number of challenges to the status quo. In 1977 a working party established by the Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Church in Ireland drew up a draft syllabus for *Religious Studies for Leaving Certificate* and asked the Department of Education to recognise the subject for examination purposes. The syllabus focused on what it called ‘factual religious material, primarily and especially that connected with Christianity’. It aimed

...to enable the student to understand his relationship with God and his fellow man, from an informed Christian viewpoint, with an interest in current issues and a commitment to the Christian and broader community (Working Party on Religious Studies, 1977, p. 2).

The rationale offered was that students in Northern Ireland could take a General Certificate of Education course and examination in Religious Studies, the results of which were recognised for matriculation into Trinity College in Dublin. The working party noted that extra sections might be needed to be added to the syllabus 'to take into account the wishes of other Churches' (p. 1).

The status of the subject remained unchanged in the curriculum prompting a further attempt in 1982. Building on the 1977 draft syllabus for religious studies, it proposed a somewhat more sophisticated aim:

The aim of the course is to enable the pupil, from an informed Christian viewpoint, to understand the relationship of God with man and the world in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and to explore the practical implications of this relationship. The course is designed to encourage an interest in current issues and an involvement in Christian and other communities (Syllabus Committee of the Episcopal Conference, 1982, p. 1)

In both the 1977 draft and the more expanded 1982 syllabus, the term 'Christian' is used throughout, without any reference to the range of Christian churches. The 1982 syllabus includes a section, absent from the 1977 draft, on, what it termed, 'comparative religion'. As with the 1977 draft, the 1982 syllabus made no progress towards implementation as the 1878 legislation prohibiting an examination remained in place.

A subsequent paper prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (discussed below) speculated on additional reasons for the lack of support for the 1982 syllabus:

Legal difficulties, and a series of changes in Government, prevented implementation but it is also true to say that there was little popular support for the notion of the formal assessment of religious education for national certification purposes at that time. Numbers of qualified teachers in the area were low and in Catholic schools, the impact of the catechetical movement had created an atmosphere in schools largely unsympathetic to formal assessment and certification (NCCA, 1995, p. 1).

It should be noted, given the theme of this paper, that the 1977 and 1982 proposals were not within the 'public space', nor were they the focus of any public contestation. The discussions were between the authorities of the Catholic church in Ireland and the relevant government officials. It was the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment which was responsible for the preparation of the first

religious education syllabus provided by the State for assessment in the certificate examinations, the first 'public' religious education project in the Republic of Ireland.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

In Ireland, the NCCA advises the Minister for Education and Science on curriculum and assessment for early childhood education and for primary and post-primary schools. Statutory since 2001, it was initially established as the Interim Curriculum and Examinations Board in 1983, evolving into the non-statutory National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in 1987. Uniquely among such councils in Europe, the members of the Council are nominated by a range of organisations representative of teacher, parent, school management, industry, and higher education interests. Neither the churches, nor any other religious grouping is represented on the Council although the school management bodies in the Republic are denominational. The Council operates on a consensus basis; agreement must be reached on any policy advice before it can be submitted to the Minister for Education and Science.

In 1994, as its first major educational innovation, a new lower secondary qualification—the Junior Certificate—was bedding down in schools, the Council turned its attention to religious education. Extensive new educational legislation was in preparation at that stage, an opportunity presented itself to lobby for the removal of the 1878 bar. A committee to consider the issue of State provision for religious education was established in 1994. The membership of the committee reflected the composition of Council, but representatives of the four major Christian churches (all of whom were involved to some degree in school management) were co-opted to support the deliberations. The committee prepared its first submission to the Department of Education in 1995 (NCCA, 1995).

What is striking about that submission, in contrast to the submissions made in the seventies and eighties, is its re-location of religious education, and of the discourse associated with it, into the *public* as opposed to an ecclesial or religious space. The submission advocates the State provision of religious education for four reasons. First, it notes the increasing professionalisation of teachers of religious education in the post-primary sector at that time. Many of these teachers in the early nineties were the first to hold specialist degree-level qualifications in the field. Second, it notes the growing range of institutions now offering courses in philosophy and theology, adding that 'the study of these subjects is no longer the preserve of the churches but is of interest to society in general' (NCCA, 1995, p. 1). Third, the paper cites the changing patterns of religious affiliation and practice in the Republic of Ireland summarising that 'in the Ireland of the 1990's, religion and religious belief has quite a different place from the position it held in the 70s and 80s'. The paper juxtaposes this decline in institutional affiliation with an increasing interest in religious and spiritual matters:

The traditional polarisation between the worlds of science and religion is changing in a renewed interest in the origins and nature of life. New interdisciplinary areas of study such as ecology, and issues raised by the technological

and communications revolution are now emerging. Public debate on these and other issues often requires an understanding of theological and philosophical perspectives (NCCA, 1995, p. 1).

The paper also notes that the changes in the religious profile of the country means that citizens are more likely to encounter 'not only Christian traditions, but a plurality of religious and non religious interpretations of life' (NCCA, 1995, p. 2). Finally, the paper turns to the political space for a further justification for State involvement in religious education. In December 1993, the Irish and British Governments had issued the Downing St. Declaration, a commitment to resolve the conflict in Northern Ireland by peaceful and political means. It made explicit reference to the need to build a relationship between the two main traditions that inhabit the island and to create trust between them. The NCCA paper suggests that religious education from an *educational* perspective might play a role in the building of that trust.

The paper concludes with a summary of an educational rationale for religious education in the curriculum. The rationale proposes that while the curriculum in its entirety can contribute to the holistic aims of education, religious education is uniquely well placed to 'provide students with opportunities for reflection on human experience as well as for the understanding and interpretation of that experience'. It continues:

Religious education, in offering opportunities to develop an informed and critical understanding of the Christian tradition in its historical origins and cultural and social expressions, should be part of a curriculum which seeks to promote the critical and cultural development of the individual in his or her social and personal contexts (NCCA, 1995, p. 5).

An educational curriculum for religious education will introduce 'a variety of ethical codes and norms for behaviour' and students will be encouraged to 'engage critically with these moral systems in an effort to arrive at a thought-through moral stance which will serve as a foundation for the decisions they will face as adults . . .' (p. 5).

The contrast with the 1977 syllabus could not be greater. There is no reference to support for or development of a relationship with God in the 1995 rationale for example. Christianity is given a particular place in the rationale, because in Ireland, Christianity 'has played a significant role in shaping our vision of ourselves, our world and our relationship with others'. The 1982 syllabus, although closer to the 1995 rationale than its 1977 predecessor, remains within the *religious* space. The 1995 rationale is firmly within the *public* space, while recognising that such space does have a religious dimension. To use Cunnane's terms, the trajectory in Ireland in recent developments in education has been away from the ecclesial towards the educational (2004, p. 31).

When the new syllabuses for religious education were finally completed, following extensive public consultation, they were offered as optional courses. Schools were, and continue to be, free to offer church devised programmes if

they so wish. Since the first examination was offered in religious education in 2003, the take-up at lower secondary level has expanded to just under half of the student cohort (Flynn, 2005). At upper secondary level, the initial numbers are small (fewer than 100) arising from restricted availability of provision (to ensure that sufficient examiners are available) but are predicted to rise steadily. The rubric that the syllabuses can be taken by students of all faiths and of no faith has been emphasised in the introduction of the courses.

The aims of the State-provided religious education clearly locate it as a public, rather than religious project. The first of these is ‘to foster an awareness that the human search for meaning is common to all peoples, of all ages and at all times’. The second is ‘to explore how this search for meaning has found, and continues to find, expression in religion’. The next is ‘to identify how understandings of God, religious traditions, and in particular the Christian tradition, have contributed to the culture in which we live, and continue to have an impact on personal life-style, interpersonal relationships and relationships between individuals and their communities and contexts’. The fourth aim listed is ‘to appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretation of life’. The final aim of the syllabus is ‘to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the student’ (Government of Ireland, 2000, p. 5).

The shift from the religious to the educational, from the institutional to the public is clear. As a recent development, it is as yet relatively un-researched. It is to be expected, that in the coming years, the changes in post-primary religious education in the Republic of Ireland will provide a fruitful resource for researchers and analysts in the field of religious education. That analysis will no doubt focus on the apparent paradigm shift from the ecclesial to the educational. In any mapping process, such shifts have an almost seductive power. They support a certain positioning, an identification of what was and what is, a compass point from which the landscape can be charted. To navigate on that basis alone would be unwise. The ‘Babel’, to use Cunnane’s term, has not converged in a single voice. The emerging discourse of religious education in primary schools (the vast majority of which are under denominational management in the Republic of Ireland) ensures that cacophony abounds.

Religious Education in Primary Schools—The Third Point of the Compass

While the focus of the public development of religious education in the Republic of Ireland has been in second-level education throughout the eighties and nineties, it is only in recent years that public discourse around religious education has begun to include primary education. In the Republic of Ireland, the vast majority of primary schools are in denominational ownership, and of that majority, a further majority is under Roman Catholic ownership and management. Padraig Hogan, in a paper prepared for the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO), the influential primary teachers’ union in Ireland, charts the development of the national school

system from a secular one at its foundation, to the largely denominational one today. He notes that on the establishment of the system, the intention was 'to unite in one system children of different creeds' (correspondence from Lord Stanley quoted in Hogan, 2003, p. 64). However, ongoing boycotts of the system by Presbyterians in Northern Ireland, and the establishment of the Church Education Society by the Church of Ireland in 1839, effectively left the national school system under Catholic control. Hogan notes that ending of British power in Ireland in 1920s marked an era of ecclesiastical control of education, supported by the newly independent State. Since the 1970's there has been increasing democratisation of school management and control, but the developments presented in Hogan's analysis are important to understand the peculiar place of religious education in the Primary School Curriculum (1999) now taught in all primary schools. The relationship between the control of primary schooling and its denominational ethos is an important one in the Irish context.

The widely regarded revised curriculum, the first curriculum revision since 1971, emphasises education as public project in the three general aims of primary education. The first of these is to 'enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual'. The second is 'to enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society'. The final aim of primary education, as set out in the introduction to the 1999 curriculum is 'to prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning' (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 7). In support of these aims, a set of key issues is offered by way of context. Under the heading 'the spiritual dimension', the introduction to the curriculum includes the following:

The importance that the curriculum attributes to the child's spiritual development is expressed through the breadth of learning experiences the curriculum offers, through the inclusion of religious education as one of the areas of the curriculum, and through the child's engagement with the aesthetic and affective domains of learning (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 27).

However, a significant qualifier is added in the introduction to the curriculum areas where it states that 'the development of curriculum for religious education remains the responsibility of the different church authorities' (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 40). Nonetheless a rationale for religious education is offered, and the responsibility of every school in this regard is signalled:

It is the responsibility of every school to provide a religious education that is consonant with its ethos and at the same time to be flexible in making alternative organisational arrangements for those who do not wish to avail of the particular religious education it offers. It is equally important that the beliefs and sensibilities of every child are respected (p. 58).

Essentially, in the Irish primary education system, there are three different approaches to the 'responsibilities' set out in the curriculum. The first—and

most common—is to follow the denominational religious education programme developed by whichever church or religious group is responsible for the management of the schools. The second approach is used in Educate Together schools, the first of which was established in 1974 with a particular focus on a multi-denominational ethos and which until 2004 offered what they called a common core religious education programme supplemented by after-hours denominational instruction organised by parents. Since 2004, an ‘ethical education curriculum’ has been introduced. Finally there a small number of ‘interdenominational schools’ where the religious education programmes of the two main Christian traditions are to be taught in full within school hours. Hogan refers to this latter approach as a ‘faulty rationale’ and ‘less than coherent’ position (2003, p. 71). It was as a consequence of a local dispute in one such school over sacramental preparation, together with what Hogan refers to as the growing dissatisfaction among primary teachers in Catholic schools on the issue of the inclusion of sacramental preparation as an integral part of the religious education programme, that the INTO convened a conference on Teaching Religion in a Changing Society in November 2002.

A central feature of the conference was a discussion of the results of research conducted by the INTO in 2002 on teaching religion in primary schools. The findings point to the complexity of religious education as a project in the primary system. The somewhat confused messages about the importance of religious education as an integral part of the curriculum but one in which the State plays no role, and the contested configurations of school governance lead, as might be expected, to some teacher anxieties about religious education:

Nobody believes it anymore. The problem is the children question it, the parents have no interest in it and very few of us believe half of what we are teaching. But if you turned around in the morning and said ‘I’m not teaching religion any more’, there would be holy murder (INTO, 2003, p. 47).

Participants in the research were divided on the purposes of religious education in primary schools. The first group saw the purpose of religious education as the fostering of faith in the children, a faith that is generally shared by the teacher. The second identified the purpose as passing on moral values which are based in, but not dependent on, religion. The third group saw their work as that of passing on information and facts, in a manner no different to the teaching of any other curriculum area (INTO, 2003, p. 66). It is of note that none of the views was held by a majority – no single view of the purpose of religious education emerged.

Two further findings of the study are of note. While there was general welcome expressed for children of different faiths in denominational schools, respondents were less welcoming of teachers who did not share the same religious ethos of the school. One commented that ‘if you don’t want to teach the religion of that school, you should find work elsewhere’ (INTO, 2003, p. 51). The report on the research notes that ‘similar views were widely held’. There is a strong sense that the school, although public, is denominationally religious.

When asked about the future of primary schooling in Ireland, respondents showed little support for non-denominational education, with a majority suggesting that multi-denominational education was their preferred option:

This suggests that the majority of respondents to the survey believe that religious education should remain part of the primary school educational system, even though it may not be exclusively of one religion (INTO, 2003, p. 57).

The report on the survey concludes by noting the complexity of the emerging picture and the contestation around the place of religious education in primary schools.

The absence of consensus in the findings and the variety of opinion and practice highlight the complexity of the current position. The results highlight the difficulty of the task of developing policy on religious education (INTO, p. 60).

Thus, to draw again on Cunnane, the 'Babel' she identifies within religious education, extends even to the public discourse on religious education. The conceptual confusion within the religious space is mirrored in the public space. It is of note how the participants in the INTO research, while they share in this confusion, also demonstrate a marked reluctance to distance themselves from the project of religious education, however this is constructed. As part of the conference, discussion groups of teachers were convened to consider a range of issues including the question of whether teachers should be able to opt-out of the teaching of religious education if they saw themselves as conscientious objectors. The rapporteur note on the discussion concludes:

Many of the participants reported no longer being practising Catholics and felt that it was hypocritical of them to teach and promote doctrines with which they no longer agreed. However, the results of the survey reported at the conference indicated that 80% of teachers agree that religion should be taught in schools, and 60% agree that the sacraments should be taught in school (INTO, 2003, p. 77).

Thus, while, to quote one participant above 'no-one believes it anymore', the strong affiliation of the teachers to the moral and ethical dimensions of religious education is noteworthy. For Hogan, the roots of this commitment are historic:

Religious traditions and religious inheritances of learning have been such a central feature of Irish cultural inheritance that to remove them from schools would be to attempt an act of cultural obliteration: the kind of action associated with some of the one-party totalitarian States of not so long ago (Hogan, 2003, p. 72).

Religion and religious education has been part of the historical tradition of Irish education. The post-primary State syllabuses for religious education recognise this in the aims of the course. Hogan's claim that the primary teachers' reluctance to distance themselves from religious education is a product of both the history of the education system and of Ireland, seems reasonable. However, it may also be useful to consider the teachers' convictions in the light of the contemporary focus on the moral purposes of teaching, and the significance of teaching as a project of public significance. Teachers' convictions about the importance of religious education may also be connected to the very public discourse about the professional identity of teachers.

This emerging discourse on teacher professional identity highlights the new public demands on, and expectations of, teachers and teaching. The work of Christopher Day for example, focuses on what he calls the new moral purposes of teaching, describing teachers as 'potentially the single most important asset in the achievement of a democratically just learning society' (2004, p. 9). Andy Hargreaves explores a similar theme in his recent work on the role of teaching and teachers in the knowledge society. He discusses the need to re-assert teaching as a 'moral, visionary profession' once more (2003, p. 160). Looking at the challenges posed by the knowledge revolution, Hargreaves asserts that teachers find themselves caught in a very public battle between competing interests and imperatives (Hargreaves, p. 2). The first of these is the imperative to be *catalysts* of the knowledge society and its promising rhetoric of prosperity and opportunity. The second imperative for teachers, in competition with the first, is to be *counterpoints* for the knowledge society and its worst excesses of individualism and rampant marketisation. The final competing imperative for teachers is to be *casualties* of a standardised system, sacrificed on the altar of accountability and performativity. Using Hargreaves's heuristic, Irish primary school teachers seem to be fighting the imperative that the moral, spiritual and religious dimension of education should become 'casualties' of cultural change in Ireland.

Religious Education in the Public Space: Casualty, Counterpoint or Catalyst?

Looking to the future, the three compass points I have used to map the progress of religious education from the ecclesial to the public space have served their purpose. Newer navigational tools are needed for the unknown territory ahead. Hargreaves's competing imperatives schema for the teaching profession offers some further potential as a heuristic for the consideration of the future of religious education in the public space. As religious education becomes more educational and less religious, as it passes from the hands of the churches into the hands of educators, as it makes the transition from a rationale based on handing on the faith to one of religious and faith literacy, it too faces competing imperatives. These imperatives, although competing, are not mutually exclusive. All can exist. All do.

In schools, as they move out of the protecting shelter of ecclesial control and support, religious education loses its protected curriculum space and must contest for precious curriculum time and for teaching and resource priorities. In the emerging educational markets, the exchange value of religious education transacts poorly against mathematics or ICT for example. Religious education could find itself a casualty in such a scenario, a victim of its new public role. In its emphasis on the spiritual and the communitarian, religious education might find itself positioned as a counterpoint to the materialism and atomisation characteristic of modern global economies. It might serve its public role by offering an alternative public view, or even a private retreat from the public compression of space and time.

How might religious education function as a catalyst in its new public space? Clearly, religious education, in its emerging public manifestation, may play a critical role in the formulation of what globalisation theorists generally call the cosmopolitan identity – the key to thriving in the globalised world:

....the lives and experiences of youth growing up today will be linked to economic realities, social processes, technological and media innovations, and cultural flows that traverse national boundaries with ever increasing momentum (Suárez-Orozco, 2004, p. 2).

In the globalised scenario, the modernist ties between identity and national boundaries are shattered. In its place, diversity and difference become the defining characteristics and the context for the development of identity. Religious education, certainly as it is evolving in the Republic of Ireland, seems to offer a potential site for the development of this cosmopolitan identity:

When distinct cultural models and social practices are deployed to address a common set of problems, youth gain the cognitive and meta-cognitive advantages inherent in examining and working on a problem from many angles. Freely, fully and respectfully arguing within a framework of difference is likely to better equip youth to deal with the complexities of the day (Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 5).

Religious education may be important for the formation of global citizens, at home with diversity, at ease in a range of cultural spaces. There is a temptation to see religious education in this form as a dispassionate project, as disengaged, as distant from ideas of commitment and conviction. However, in the new educational space in which it finds itself, engagement and conviction is everything. Hargreaves points to the need for pupils in schools to be ‘emotionally engaged with their learning’ (2003, p. 46), and calls for greater emphasis on the moral purpose of teaching. He notes that a tendency towards a ‘diluted vocabulary’ that shows a ‘lack of courage and a loss of nerve’ (2003, p. 161). Day talks about passionate, engaged teaching:

To be passionate about teaching is not only to express enthusiasm but also to enact it in a principled, values-led, intelligent way. All effective teachers have a passion for their subject, a passion for their pupils and a passionate

belief that who they are and how they teach can make a difference in their pupil's lives, both in the moment of teaching and in the days, weeks, months and even years afterwards (2004, p. 12).

Passionate, engaged religious education for a globalised world is just one of the possibilities for religious education as catalyst in the public space. Others are emerging. All will be contested. That the contestation will continue in the ecclesial and religious space is certain. The spaces are not mutually exclusive. That the contestation will also be public is beyond question. For the globalised societies in which we find ourselves, and for the schools which serve and shape them, religious education has become too important to leave to the churches.

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EDUCATING FOR RELIGIOUS CITIZENSHIP: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS IDENTITY FORMATION

Siebren Miedema

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Introduction

In this chapter I will give arguments to underpin the conclusion that the stringent splitting up of the educational system into religiously neutral State schools, on one hand, and religious or denominational affiliated schools, on the other hand, is pedagogically speaking non-defensible and, speaking from a societal perspective, undesirable. From a pedagogical point of view all children in all schools should have the full possibility to develop in a substantial way (that is not only cognitively but also experientially and practically) their religious identity as part of their broader identity.

From a societal perspective, it is desirable that children already in the embryonic society of the school experience, or are confronted by and become acquainted with, other children's religious backgrounds, ideas and practices. Seeing the impact of the religious domain on political, cultural and economic areas they can also benefit from such experiences and insights when they encounter religious 'others' in society at large. So, from a societal point of view, all schools should be obliged to foster a religious dimension to citizenship, and thereby bring about mutual respect and understanding.

The Differentiation Thesis

Since the 19th century State schools have been defended in several countries (for example the Netherlands and the United States) on the basis of a set of arguments that have been characterised as the *differentiation thesis*. This view stresses 'the differentiation of the economy from the household and the emergence of the nation-State (...). While many other systems (e.g., art, law, mass media) are also viewed

as developing relatively differentiated forms . . . the economy and nation-State, with their large-scale, bureaucratic forms of organisation, are generally seen as setting the terms of modern life' (Osmer, 1999, p. 280). The public school is positioned as a function of the nation-State educating all students regardless of their sex, race, social background, and religion, and fulfilling an integrative function in society by educating all future citizens.

The differentiation thesis also includes a view on the role and function of religion in society which impacts on the view of the role of religion in State schools. The relative autonomy of all societal subsystems, according to this view, resulted in a new role for religion. Religion lost the integrative function in society it had earlier in history and became just one system next to many other systems. Religion became a system primarily located in the private sphere for the benefit of individuals, families and groups. The public role of religion was largely viewed as indirect, an expression of the moral commitments of individual members as they participated in other social spheres (see Osmer, 1999, p. 280). Religion no longer played a privileged and normative determining role, based upon church dogmas, within other societal spheres.

This view on the role of religion in society also had an impact on the role of religion in State schools. With the founding of the new Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1813 the separation between State and Church was implied. Although the elementary State schools were still Protestant (with prayer, the singing of psalms and story-telling about Jesus as the example par excellence of morality), there was no longer any place for the teaching of the Protestant confession of faith. The teaching of church dogma was seen as a task of the diverse religious denominations. The State school was to serve national unity by emphasising moral education and the humanitarian virtues. The strict regulations brought into force in 1830 further endorsed the dominant educational policy with respect to the relationship between State schools and the religious denominations (see Miedma & De Ruyter, 1999, pp. 20–21). After 1830, State schools have turned more and more in the direction of some form of neutrality concerning religion (see De Ruyter & Miedema, 1996; 2000).

In the United States the teaching of religion in public, that is State-supported, schools also became a problem in the 19th century (Osmer, 1999). Before this time the beliefs and moral principles of Protestant Christianity, and even the catechism, were part of the curriculum of the public schools. The turn away from this position was initiated by the public education movement, and resulted in the constitutional principle of the disestablishment of religion from public schools. Religions and religious teaching were removed from the explicit curriculum. As a result of a series of court decisions in the 20th century the remaining truncated forms of religious expression and teaching (morning devotions with a time of prayer and the study of the stories from the Bible) were gradually characterised as illegal.

The relative autonomy of the State school, its neutral relationship with religious institutions, and the impossibility of any form of material or substantial religious education (only cognitive information on various religions is provided) are frequently further reinforced by reference to the 'secularisation argument' or the

'decline of religion thesis'. This argument runs as follows: the secularisation process has led to the situation where a majority of parents do not have any affiliation with religion whatsoever and do not wish their children to be socialised into a religion through school-based religious education (Dronkers, 1996). The 'decline of religion thesis' is based on the work of sociologists of religion such as Weber, Durkheim and Habermas in which 'religious beliefs and practices are viewed as the outdated vestige of pre-modern, traditional forms of life that are superseded as science and other forms of modern rationality gain greater influence in society' (Osmer, 1999, p. 281).

The Deprivatisation of Religion

The findings of recent research from the fields of the sociology of religion and of practical theology, however, challenge the foundations of the view that religious education should not be taught in State schools at all (United States) or should only be taught in the form of giving cognitive information on various world views, as one school subject among others (the Netherlands). These findings cast doubt upon the rigid validity of both the 'differentiation thesis' and the 'secularisation thesis' (see Osmer, 1999; Ziebertz, 1995).

The emergence of global systems of communication, transportation and economic exchange has created a new situation in which economic and political systems are no longer tightly bound together. The emerging global economy is providing the all-pervasive system for all the other systems. As a result, differentiation can no longer be adequately conceptualised in terms of a 'single society' constituting the 'nation-State'. The previous aims of education in State or public schools, namely, creating a viable national identity and preparing persons for participation in national economies are no longer sufficient.

Education in State schools should take the impact of the processes of globalisation seriously by preparing students for their encounter with cultural 'others'. As part of this it should prepare them for the encounter with 'religious others'. Recent empirical research by Casanova has shown that the impact of religion on political, economical and cultural areas is enormous. This phenomenon has been characterised by Casanova as the *deprivatisation of religion* in modern life (see Osmer, 1999). So, contrary to the claim of the differentiation thesis that religion has lost its societal function and has become a system primarily located in the private sphere at the level of individuals and families, this deprivatisation view puts religion back in the public domain and extends the public domain to a global scale. This insight challenges State schools to answer the question of how are they going to prepare students for the encounter with people who are adherents of other belief systems and who share in other religious practices? In what sense do they foster the religious dimension of civic education? The same question needs to be answered by religiously affiliated schools and especially by the closed, segregated variants of these schools. Do such schools foster or hinder the preparation of students for encounter and dialogue with adherents of other religions?

The criticism of the 'secularisation thesis' provides an additional justification for posing the above questions. Quite often the interpretation of this thesis presupposes a rather narrow definition of religiousness. 'Religiosity' is identified with the 'socialisation into, and membership of, a particular religious community or church' (Dronkers, 1996). However, in the present postmodern context there is an astonishing high endorsement of 'religiosity' in more general terms. The content of such postmodern religiosity is predominantly undetermined or diffuse, and is no longer institutional-centred but individual-centred. The 'secularisation thesis' or the 'decline of religion' viewpoint may indeed be valid for the process of church-bound or institutionally related religious socialisation, but this is only one of the forms of religiosity that can be found in present societies or that may be embodied by students attending public or State schools. So, the 'secularisation thesis' should at least be complemented by, if not replaced by, the '*plurality of religiosity*' thesis (see Ziebertz, 1995).

The Effects of Denominational Schools

In what has been presented so far attention has been paid to State or public schools, but what about the position of denominational or religiously affiliated schools? I limit myself here to the situation in the Netherlands. Until the 1960s denominational (Catholic and Protestant) schools were characterised by their lack of openness to students (and their parents) and teachers who did not subscribe to the view of the Christian tradition that there was no other way for people to find salvation but through belief in Jesus Christ. From the perspective of such an *exclusive* stance other religions (and even certain sub-denominations within the Christian tradition) were perceived as not being able to offer the salvation of God as revealed in the Bible and through Jesus. Since the 1960s many of these denominational schools have changed radically to become 'open' schools. All students are now welcome provided they respect the Christian foundation of the school. The former exclusive stance has changed into an *inclusive* one based upon the view that God's revelation, and real experiences of God, are also to be found in religions other than Christianity. Frequently, however, the revelation associated with Jesus Christ is still interpreted as the ultimate salvation (Ziebertz, 1994).

Elsewhere Wardekker and Miedema have identified three types of denominational schools based on the above exclusivity-inclusivity dichotomy (Wardekker & Miedema, 2001a). All three types of denominational schools presently exist. The first type of such schools, the *segregated school*, is characterised by exclusivity based upon the absolute stance that true belief can only be found in the God of the Bible and in His Son, Jesus Christ. This belief provides the missionary message of the school, of the church and of the families which send their children to the school. There is complete correspondence between the basic religious assumptions of such a denominational school, the church which 'manages' the school and the families of the students attending such a school. The school is closed to teachers and students who adhere to other religions, and is only open to those who want to give form and

content to its fundamental convictions in an active way. The basic assumptions of the school are formulated in church terms as a fixed, binding credo that has to be accepted. Stress is placed on the homogeneity of the religious convictions of all the participants involved in, and related to, the school. The school as a relatively closed 'pedagogical province' is regarded as offering the best environment with which to transmit the subject-matter of the Christian tradition and nurture the students as 'God fearing individuals'.

The second type of schools, the *program school*, is characterised by a religious stance that is formulated by the teachers as pedagogical professionals. Given the religious heterogeneity of the schools' student population, and to prevent the religious subject-matter becoming dependent solely on the view of the parents, the teachers define the religious position of the school in a way that provides an educationally justifiable program. While the school remains closed to teachers who adhere to other religions than Christianity, it is open to all students whose parents respect the basic religious assumptions of the school as formulated in the school's educational program. Within certain limits, the interpretation of the Christian tradition is focused on the personal rather than being church or institutionally bound.

Two forms of such program schools can be identified. In the first form, while the religious truth claim concerning the Christian religion remains exclusive, (that is, interpreted in absolutist terms), the consideration of the Christian religion by non-Christian students is dealt with in terms of a pedagogical, didactical or developmental considerations only. The central problem is in what way can the subject-matter of the Christian religion be most adequately transmitted to the non-Christian students. Such a program school (which we call program school-1) is really just a sophisticated version of the segregated school type. The segregated school, and to a somewhat lesser extent, the program school-1, both create an environment in which the possibilities for informal contact with the varieties of religious cultures are greatly reduced, and the way in which other religious interpretations are perceived is strictly controlled. As a consequence, this type of school restricts the space students that have for constructing their own identities. The 'program school-1' is open to non-Christian students, but the starting point, and the criterion for adequate religious teaching and learning, remains the content of the Christian tradition.

If the basic religious assumptions of the program are formulated in exclusivist terms, but in the actual classroom praxis, teachers interpret these assumptions in an inclusive way (we call this program school-2), the school identity is rather ambivalent. The school's problem is now how to cope with an inclusivist praxis combined with an exclusivist program. This may be the case when the teacher wants to begin from the starting point of the students *in toto*, that is, by including the cultural and religious starting points of students who are not Christians. For example, this may mean that in practice when Christmas is celebrated in the school, and the story from the Bible of Jesus' birth is told or read and the rituals and symbols are experienced, children (or parents, or imams, or pundits) may bring into the school the parallel 'celebration of light' of their religious tradition, and that no privileged position is claimed for the Christian celebration.

In the third type of denominational schools, the Christian *encounter school*, the God of other religions (or at least the God of the monotheistic religions) is considered to be the same as the God of the Bible, but the exceptional value of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is maintained. The school is open to students from all religions, and sometimes also teachers from non-Christian religions are appointed to the school staff. The teachers explicitly try to deal with the cultural and religious knowledge, practices and experiences the students embody on the basis of their family upbringing. Other religions, however, are always put into a perspective based on the Christian tradition. Just like in the program school-2 identity type, there is a tension in this view between an exclusivist and an inclusivist stance.

Due to the growing openness of denominational schools, most schools today have to deal with a plurality of religious backgrounds. It is quite normal for inner city denominational schools to have a very high percentage of students from other than Christian religious traditions. This situation presents a challenge for these schools if they wish to take the cultural and religious background of these students seriously. Is it in such a context legitimate, and pedagogically speaking adequate, to continue to characterise such schools as Christian (Catholic, Protestant, or Ecumenical)?

Such 'open' denominational schools cannot return to being to a 'closed', segregated schools. Such a return would be interpreted as privatising the religious from the public domain and positioning it only in the private spheres of families and associations. Given Dutch history this would mean a 're-pillarisation' (see Sturm et al., 1998). (This refers to the comprehensive institutional segregation or division which characterises Dutch society.) The 'open' schools have also to take the impact of the process of globalisation seriously. What will this mean for the aims of education? What will be the effect on the substance and praxis of religious education? An interesting question here also is the implication of the impact of the deprivatisation of religion on denominational schools. Such open schools should, in my opinion, try to avoid a narrow, exclusive focus on their own social, cultural and religious group and to just their local, regional or national identity. Instead they should try to foster an international, global, and dialogical attitude in their students (Schweitzer, 1999).

Religious Education as Transformative Power

Recasting the 'differentiation thesis' both Friedrich Schweitzer and Richard R. Osmer point to the important role *civil society* (Schweizer speaks about international or global civil society) can play in the healthy functioning of democratic cultures. Following Cohen and Arato's interpretation of the Habermasian distinction between system and life-world, they define civil society as 'a sphere of social interaction between the economy and the State composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication' (Osmer, 1999,

p. 285; Schweitzer, 1999, p. 305). Civil society, according to Osmer, is located between the State and the economy, including, but transcending, the private sphere. And religion is an important *mediating structure* in civil society located between the public and the private spheres.

This insight is fully compatible with my own work in which, on the basis of an in-depth analysis of Habermas' dichotomy of system and life-world, I also located the school within this dichotomy (Miedema, 1994, p. 201). The school as a pedagogical institution is placed right on the 'seam' (or the broader 'zone of interference') between the system and the life-world (Habermas, 1987, p. 395). Actually, schools are remarkable *mediating institutions*, characterised by their functions of distributing and renewing and, as such, are linked to the life-world. As separate systems they deal with interpretation schedules, value patterns, and expressive schedules. Concerning the pedagogical aim of communicative competence they also anticipate those situations in which the person being educated will be able to act communicatively. Within a critical social theory which highlights such a theory of communicative action, the school functions as a resource for the production of social, cultural and religious meaning (see Miedema, 1994).

Schools – including their religious domain, practices and experiences – can indeed be interpreted as *transformative resources* for both the public and the private sphere. Fostering a religious attitude in students during the religious education provided in both denominational and State schools can free students from a fixation on patterns of mere conventional ritual behaviour, dogmatic belief propositions, and from stigmatising the cultural and religious ideas, habits and practices of others. Such schools can prepare students for combating the corrosive effects of the global marketplace, media, and transportation, all of which have a disruptive effect on forms of local and global communities (Osmer, 1999). So, education and school-based religious education have the possibility to react to the colonisation of the life-world by the media (in pursuit of money and power) not just defensively, but also offensively. They may help students to develop and establish a critical, systemic and normative perspective on this processes of colonisation. Here, the idea of 'another world', subject to the criteria of understanding, solidarity and justice can be practiced and tested in action (Miedema, 1994, pp. 201–202).

The view expressed here is in my opinion fully in line with Strike's plea for 'an ethic for strangers' in his 1999 Kohlberg Memorial Lecture in which he tempers the dividing line between the sphere of the personal and the associational, that is, the community and the world of strangers or society. Strike argues for a strategy that rejects the stance 'that fellow citizens are strangers. Although we are diverse, we are also members of a large inclusive community' (Strike, 1999, p. 7). These fellow citizens, according to Strike, are people with whom we are connected as members of a common polity and with whom we must enter into dialogue in order to make mutually satisfactory arrangements for a common good. The 'other' may continue to be a member of another religion, linguistic group or culture, but these strangers are our fellow citizens, are people for whom we are responsible, and with whom we must engage in deliberations about our common fate. In a pluralistic

society, as a different kind of community the polity is a place where strangers meet as citizens. For our schools today the relevant question is how do they help to construct this polity (see Strike, 1999).

The Aim of Religious Education

Last, but absolutely not least, the implications of the above for the aim of education in general, and of religious education in particular, must be addressed in a manner which focuses on the notion of 'religious citizenship education' or 'educating for religious citizenship'.

In my view the aim of schools should explicitly be directed towards the development of the whole person. For this reason religious education, or formative religious education, ought to be a substantial and integral part of the curriculum of every school. Religious education should not unilaterally be conceptualised in knowledge-based or cognitive terms. Schools that organise stand-alone activities which only provide neutral or objective information about a religious world view, or about different religious world views, under the label of religious education, do not offer the optimal conditions for active and dynamic personal identity formation (see Wardekker & Miedema, 2001a). Knowledge should be positioned in a functional relationship to the religious experiences the students gain.

In religious education the acquiring of religious experiences and a religious attitude should not be completely separated from the wider processes of obtaining other experiences and attitudes. Every artificial distinction between the religious and other domains of experience should be precluded (see Miedema, 1995). Explicit presentation and representation of a rich and plural array of religious 'subject matter' in the form of religious frames of reference, models, practices, rituals, and narratives is a necessary pre-requisite for making individuation possible on the basis of socialisation processes. These presentations and representations are not intended simply to be transmitted by the teachers and internalised by the students in their presented or represented form, but should be offered to the students as potential identity-forming and transformative material. Such an interaction between the presented material and the students should be characterised by a non-dogmatic, non-compelling, 'openness' which offers students multiple possibilities for their own development. Contrary to notion of the school as an institution for the linear transmission of knowledge and skills, schools should function as communities of diverse practices, and as communities of learners (see Wardekker & Miedema, 2001b). In such schools the students can learn to see each other as citizens of the embryonic society which is the school community (see Dewey, 1972). The students of this embryonic society can learn that they are responsible for one another and must pursue their common end through dialogue and co-operation (see Strike, 1999, p. 19).

Personal identity formation through religious education can be supported by the encouragement of a critical-evaluative attitude on the part of the students. Unquestioning acceptance, or full identification with, the views of the teacher is not the most appropriate environment for successful identity formation. Rather, to

follow the ideas of Dewey, the focus should be upon the growth of the potentiality for an active and critical reconstruction of different and differing perspectives, be they ideals, norms, values, knowledge or narratives. Such practices and processes in school will enhance the capacity of the students to integrate these perspectives into their own personality, promote the ongoing organisation and re-organisation of their perspectives, and resource the reconstruction of the self.

To conclude, it is argued that the education of religious citizens is based on the formation of the identity of the students through processes that require them to negotiate with the perspectives of 'others' and integrate such perspectives into their own actions and reflections. Educating for religious citizenship is not just an unrealistic dream but is rather a pedagogical, theological, societal and global necessity.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Dr. Andrew G. McGrady

Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University

Introduction

The relationship between religions, the State and the human rights forms a backdrop to many of the articles in this handbook. A common approach is to explore the religious rights of individuals or of religious communities, both in general with regard to religious freedom, and in particular with regard to religious education. This chapter looks at the relationship from the complementary perspective of the 'expectations' of the State concerning the religious education of its citizens and the associated responsibilities of religious leaders and of those providing religious education to enhance human rights. This issue has been brought into sharp focus by globalisation, cultural plurality and inter-religious conflict and the need that thereby arises for social cohesion, tolerance, and inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue within the civic life of democratic societies. This perspective has profound implications for policy towards religious education at national and international levels. In addressing these concerns the relevant declarations and documentation of the United Nations in recent decades are considered first along with the 2000–2004 dialogues between European religions and the Council of Europe (taken as a case study of the implementation at regional level of the principles articulated at global level by the UN). The chapter then considers the implications of the above documentation for religious education in the areas of human rights, citizenship education and tolerance. Differences in policy across States often reflect cultural factors, so readers are also directed to relevant chapters in section 5, which concentrates on cultural issues.

The issue of religious education and citizenship within democratic, pluralist societies has been recently addressed by Jackson (2004) (who considers whether or not in pluralist societies religious education should be replaced within the school

curriculum by subjects such as citizenship education and offers a critique of such alternatives), by Gearon (2002; 2004) (who explores the contribution of religious education to the area of human rights education within the framework of the citizenship education that is now a statutory part of the National Curriculum in England and Wales), and by Shahid and van Koningsveld (2002) (who explore, among other legal issues, the position of Islamic religious education in selected European States and the need to address anti-Muslimism and Islamophobia).

In those UN and Council of Europe member States, such as France, in which there is a strict separation between ‘Church’ and State and no religious education is provided in ‘State’—or as Jackson (2004) refers to them ‘common’—schools, consideration of the above issues has given rise to the possibility of promoting tolerance by introducing the teaching of religious ‘facts’ in schools. The French debate is considered elsewhere in this section of this handbook (see Williams) and in section five (see Estivalezes). The notion of religious education in the public space is also considered in this section (see Looney) and in section five (see especially contributions by Chidester and Grelle). The issue of the rights of religious communities to engage in activities related to religious education is also covered in the present section (see Schreiner) and in section five by Gearon. This chapter should therefore obviously be read in conjunction with these other chapters.

Human Rights, Religion and Tolerance

The United Nations

A new framework is evolving for the consideration of the role and nature of religious education in the ‘public space’ based upon the work of various United Nations agencies concerning the definition and promotion of human rights. Human rights are proclaimed in the Charter of the UN (1945) and the International Bill of Rights which consists of three instruments: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Civic and Political Rights (1966). Flowing from these are other relevant human rights instruments such as the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). These documents have been followed by further documents most notably the 2003 resolution on the Elimination of all forms of Religious Intolerance of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR). The 1968 Proclamation of Teheran (proclaimed by the International Conference on Human Rights at its meeting Teheran), and the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action which highlighted that the protection and promotion of human rights is the ‘first responsibility’ of all governments, and called on all governments to counter intolerance and related violence based on religion or belief. The most recent documents are the 2001 Durban Declaration issued by the World Conference against Racism,

Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance organised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and those issued by the International Consultative Conference on School Education in relation to Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination held in Madrid in November 2001. Post-Madrid this work has been continued by groups such as the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief (see for example Larsen and Plesner, 2002).

In addition, in 1987 the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights appointed a *Special Rapporteur on the question of Religious Intolerance*, (since 2001 renamed the *Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief*). There have been several such Special Rapporteurs who have issued a number of reports based upon a number of studies. (The Special Rapporteur referred to throughout this chapter is Professor Abdelfattah Amor [1993–2004]; the Special Rapporteur at the time of the writing of this chapter is Mrs. Asma Jahangir (2004–]).

The Council of Europe

There have been corresponding developments across the globe at regional level, for instance in Europe. In 1950 the Council of Europe adopted the *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*. In its preamble it makes clear its relationship with the UN Universal Declaration: ‘being resolved, as the Governments of European countries which are like-minded and have a common heritage of political traditions, ideals, freedom and the rule of law, to take the first steps for the collective enforcement of certain of the rights stated in the Universal Declaration ...’ In 1999 the Council of Europe appointed a Commissioner for Human Rights (currently Mr. Alvaro Gil-Robles). In 2000 the Commissioner initiated a dialogue with representatives of the Europe’s leading faiths concerning the role of religions in overcoming the principal social challenges facing the member States. This dialogue began in 2000 in Syracuse and continued in Strasbourg (2001), in Louvain-La-Neuve (2002) and in Malta (2004). The 2000 consultation in Syracuse explored the role of religions in the prevention of armed conflicts. The Strasbourg consultation (2001) focussed on ‘Church’–State relationships among the member States of the Council of Europe and on the exercise of the right to freedom of religion as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. The focus of the third consultation held at Louvain-La-Neuve (2002) was on human rights, culture and religion. The Malta consultation (2004) discussed the possibility of establishing a foundational programme in religious education in all member States, including those in which a strict separation between ‘Church’ and State obtained. Such a programme is envisaged as promoting tolerance and the reduction of the potential of religious differences to be a source of conflict. Consideration was also given to the establishment of a European Centre for Religious Education focussing on human rights. (This objective was supported by the Recommendation of the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly of 19 September 2005, doc. 10673). A further consultation has been organised for Kazan in the Russian Federation (February 2006).

Parallel to the work of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe other work has been carried out by the Directorate General IV (Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport) of the Council, most notably the 2003 *Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention* (the Opatija Declaration). In 2004 the Council also organised the Oslo Conference on the *Religious Dimension of Intercultural Education* the proceedings of which have been published. This was part of a wider Council of Europe project which is on-going at the present time. A handbook for teachers across the 46 member States on introducing the study of religions as a dimension of intercultural education will be published in 2006. Another major initiative of the Council is the *Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Project*.

The Relationship Between Human Rights and Religion and Culture

Human Rights

Human rights have been articulated through a process of international dialogue and are increasingly recognised in international and national law. Article 5 of the 1968 *Proclamation of Teheran* states that 'the primary aim of the United Nations in the sphere of human rights is the achievement by each individual of the maximum freedom and dignity'. It continues 'for the realisation of this objective, the laws of every country should grant each individual, irrespective of race, language, religion or political belief, freedom of expression, of information, of conscience and of religion, as well as the right to participate in the political, economic, cultural and social life of his country'. It notes (article 11), that 'gross denials of human rights arising from discrimination on grounds of race, religion, belief or expressions of opinion outrage the conscience of mankind and endanger the foundations of freedom, justice and peace in the world'. It concludes by urging all peoples and governments 'to redouble their efforts to provide for all human beings a life consonant with freedom and dignity and conducive to physical, mental, social and spiritual welfare.'

Human rights are universal. They are the birthright of every human being flowing from the inherent dignity of each and every human being; they are not 'granted' or 'gifted' by governments. They are for all people 'without distinction' irrespective of 'race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status'. Human rights are the product of human rationality being 'a common understanding of the peoples of the world concerning the inalienable and inviolable rights of all members of the human family' (*Proclamation of Teheran*, 1968, Art. 2). They constitute 'a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations' (subtitle, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*). The 1993 *Vienna Declaration* of the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights states that: 'all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated'. As such human rights form a total package and cannot be treated selectively. To weaken one right is to weaken all rights.

Human Rights and Religion

Human rights include protection for persons belonging to religious minorities and the right to freedom of thought, conscience or religion. As Martin (2001, par. 2) notes 'Religious freedom constitutes a fundamental human right and can certainly be considered one of the cornerstones of the edifice of human rights, because it touches such an intimate sphere of human existence and personal identity, the relationship between the person and the Transcendent.' There is of course extensive debate concerning the manner in which religion is to be defined but it is sufficient to note that human rights documentation refers to 'religion', 'belief' and 'conviction'. Communities of conviction may subsist in a culture the values of which are not linked to a religious or theistic moral vision. Gearon (2002, p. 3) notes that, in terms of human rights, it is sufficient to regard religion as a 'self designating' category.

The 2002 Louvain Council of Europe consultation concluded that human rights should not replace religion but that, on the contrary, both represent two different expressions, even two different forms, of adhesion to the same fundamental principles based on the inherent dignity of every human being (Gil-Robles, 2004, p. 39). Human rights, 'as the product of reason, are an expression of universal values in human rationality, ... constitute a universal expression of principles and belong to the sphere of public life, while religion represents a specific formulation of these principles within each community, (ibid. p. 40). Gearon usefully points out that there should be a close correspondence between religious moral visions and human rights since religious traditions were 'the first systems to present moral codes as *universal* moral codes—as well as, simultaneously, the major potential obstacle to the implementation of such norms' (Gearon, 2002, p. 5). The Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales refers to the 'doctrine of human rights' and notes that 'a properly critical understanding of human rights can offer humanity a universal moral code', (1998, par. 1). In recent decades the supportive response of the Catholic Church to human rights has been expressed in the encyclical letter of Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* (1963) which outlines (in pars. 28–30) a 'charter of rights', and the declaration on religious liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*, of the Second Vatican Council, promulgated by Pope Paul VI in December 1965. Reference to the promotion of human rights was also a consistent theme in the teaching of the late Pope John Paul II. The Bishop's of England and Wales note that the 'doctrine of human rights' for the Catholic Church is based both upon human reason (or natural law) and upon revelation particularly on the doctrines of 'creation and of the Incarnation' (1998, par. 9).

The connections between religion and human rights in the concrete however are multivalent. Paradoxically, a clash between the competing moral visions of religious communities is often a source of conflict and violence between the adherents of these religions. As Gearon notes human rights 'are far from universal in terms of their equitable distribution or their acceptance in certain religious, ideological or other cultural contexts' (Gearon, 2002, 3). Indeed, 'religion as a cultural phenomenon continues to manifest itself as a force for social and political conflict, violence and repression' (Gearon, 2002, pp. 5–6). It should be remembered that it was

the horrors of the Second World War, and the inter-religious violence so evident within it, that gave a strong impetus to the articulation of human rights flowing not from religious moral codes or divine revelation but from transnational declarations based upon the rational recognition of what it means to be human. 'Through Nazi persecution of religious, ethnic and other minorities, there is an historical relationship between religious persecution and genocide and thus to the founding 1948 Universal Declaration' (Gearon, 2002, p. 5). The global situation following the attacks in the USA on September 11th 2001, and the subsequent bombings and wars across the globe, are additional powerful reminders of the continuing appeal to religious differences in the justification of terror, denial of human rights and war. Amor (2003), in his report to 59th Session of the UN General Assembly notes a continuing 'overall rise in intolerance and discrimination against religious minorities and women in situations of extreme risk and an increase in religious extremism affecting all religions . . . Intra- and inter-religious extremism is a problem that affects not one society or religion in particular, but, in varying degrees, all religions' (2003, pars. 130, 136). In the light of the attacks of September 11th 2001 'there is now an urgent need to confront the challenges presented by the scourge of religious extremism, but above all to address the scourges of poverty, injustice and underdevelopment, which are a breeding ground for all kinds of extremism, including religious extremism' (ibid, par. 138). A statement of the World Council of Churches in 2000 also refers to continuing 'friction between dominant religious forces and minority religions' and notes that 'The situation today is far worse than it was 20 years ago . . . Incidents of religious intolerance are on the increase, creating tensions and conflicts within societies' (WCC, 2000, par. 1). Governments increasingly appeal to churches and other religious groups to 'support narrow national, racial and ethnic aims, and to support discriminatory legislation which formalises intolerance' (ibid., par. 3).

Religion and Culture

Religion and culture are intrinsically intertwined (see for instance Williams, 2004). Religion contributes to the cultural identity of individuals, groups and societies. Thus the relationship between religion and human rights is part of a wider relationship between human rights and culture both within a particular society and globally. Ayton-Shenker usefully summarises this interrelationship as follows: 'Cultural background is one of the primary sources of identity. It is the source for a great deal of self-definition, expression, and a sense of group belonging. As cultures interact and intermix, cultural identities change. This process can be enriching, but disorientating' (Ayton-Shenker, 1995, p. 1). Gearon further notes that: 'Human history itself is in part the struggle between cultures. And one of the most powerful manifestations of human culture is religious belief' (2002, p. 7).

Thus a clash of religions is usually associated with a clash of cultures and as part of this clash one religious or cultural grouping seeks to justify the denial of the human rights of another grouping in terms of the superiority of one religious

culture over another. Based on an appeal to 'cultural relativism' such actions deny the universality of human rights and common human dignity. According to Ayton-Shenker the ever-recurring dilemma is to show 'how can universal rights exist in a culturally diverse world' (1995, p. 1) or be reconciled with the clash of cultures that has come to characterise our time. She insists that 'cultural relativism', arising from whatever source, must be rejected because human values are universal and constitute the standard against which all cultures, including religious culture, must be judged. She argues against cultural relativism by quoting Charles Norchi's statement that the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* 'represents a broader consensus on human dignity than does any single culture or tradition' (quoted by Ayton-Shenker, 1995, p. 2). Similarly, Pope John Paul II referring to 'two essential characteristics of the very idea of human rights: their universality and their indivisibility' notes 'these distinctive features must be strongly reaffirmed, in order to reject the criticisms of those who would use the argument of cultural specificity to mask violations of human rights, and the criticisms of those who weaken the concept of human dignity by denying juridical weight to social, economic and cultural rights' (1998, par 2).

In the democratic, human rights based public space a religious culture, like any culture, does not have absolute rights: 'The right to culture is limited at the point at which it infringes on another human right. No right can be used at the expense or destruction of another, in accordance with international law' (Ayton-Shenker, 1995, p. 4). Human rights therefore constitute a standard to be achieved not just by governments but by religions as well. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales also notes that 'in the past, too, the Roman Catholic Church has sometimes seemed to side with those who opposed the very idea of human rights' (1998, par. 12) and that 'there may also be failings within the Church which at present are more apparent to those outside it than to those within. Responsible bodies in the Church can never stop examining their own procedures and performances to ensure that human rights are observed, both in letter and spirit, in all they do' (ibid., par. 17). In this context some questions can be raised about the 1990 Cairo *Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* because of the cultural relativism implied in articles 24 and 25 which afford primacy the Islamic Shari'ah over the UN *Universal Declaration*.

The Responsibilities of Religion in the Public Space

Religious freedom is exercised in the public space. Not only does the State have a duty to ensure the religious freedom of its citizens but it also has a right to expect that the exercise of such religious freedom contributes not only to the good of the individual but to the common good. The 1981 UN Declaration on the *Elimination of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief* strongly expresses the conviction that 'freedom of religion or belief should ... contribute to the attainment of the goals of world peace, social justice and friendship among peoples', and also states that it is concerned 'by manifestations of intolerance and by the existence

of discrimination in matters of religion or belief still in evidence in some areas of the world' (Preamble). Amor (2001a, par. 24) further emphasises that 'the State plays a crucial role in terms of encouraging tolerance and ensuring respect for the different religious identities'. As Martin (2001, par. 3) states: 'religious freedom must be exercised in such a way that it fully respects the views and the religious traditions of others'. This is reiterated by Gil-Robles who notes: 'It is too often forgotten that rights and freedoms do not exist in isolation but imply the existence of countervailing duties. Religious communities have a duty to ease the tensions which can arise between members of different religions or with non-believers on a religious point of view' (2004, p. 53). Martin, representing the Holy See, also situates religious discourse within 'the framework of democratic debate' and citizenship, (2001, par.3). Thus 'the role of the State is not just to help organise relations between denominations and convictions, but also to safeguard public order' (Gil-Robles, 2004).

For those in positions of religious leadership several important implications flow from the above. Firstly religious leaders and communities must be proactive in the promotion of human rights and the overcoming of intolerance and religious related violence through dialogue. Martin notes that '(e)very religion, just as every culture, is capable of fully fostering all human rights and indeed of providing the fertile ground in which respect for human rights and the respect for the dignity of all can take root' (2001, par. 2) and that 'all too often, religion is superficially presented in contemporary society only in the context of division and intolerance, rather than its capacity to foster respect and unity' (ibid., par. 3). The World Council of Churches urges that churches 'provide a model of tolerance to their societies and to the world' (WCC, 2000, par. 3), and has embarked on the 'Decade to Overcome Violence' initiative. The recent *Durban Declaration* urges 'leaders of religious communities to continue to confront racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance through, inter alia, promotion and sponsoring of dialogue and partnerships to bring about reconciliation, healing and harmony within and among societies, invites religious communities to participate in promoting economic and social revitalisation, and encourages religious leaders to foster greater cooperation and contact between diverse racial groups' (Art. 211). Within the Roman Catholic context the work of the *Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue* is also of note, especially the document *The Spirituality of Inter-religious Dialogue* (1999). Further, religious leaders and religious educators have a responsibility to ensure that the fruits of such inter-religious dialogue are reflected in the quality of the religious nurture and religious education provided. Martin (2001, par. 4) draws attention to the fact that the 'formation of future teachers should pay special attention to their ability to sensitively address divisive historical issues'. Many commentators note that in this context particular attention should also be paid to school curricula and to textbooks.

Secondly there is a need for dialogue between religions to identify their common ethical core and to relate this to human rights. As Amor notes 'while the practice of religion may take very diverse forms, it is still inspired by universal values' (2003, par.119). This work has of course already begun. For instance, the *Geneva*

Spiritual Appeal was signed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (then Mrs. Mary Robinson) and Religious Leaders in Geneva in 1999. The religious leaders referred to the fact that their personal convictions, or the religions to which they owe allegiance, have in common a respect for the integrity of humankind, a rejection of hatred and violence and the hope for a better and more just world. The search for a common ethical core is of course not new. Since 1991 Hans Kung has encouraged such an ethical quest based upon the conviction that there can be 'No survival without a world ethic. No world peace without peace between the religions. No peace between the religions without dialogue between the religions' (Kung, 1991, p.xv). At the European level, the initiative of the European Commission in providing funding for ten years (up to 2004) for the *Soul for Europe* initiative should also be noted.

Thirdly, it must be insisted that the tendency towards violence and the denial of human rights does not arise from any particular religion but is present among members of all religions. Fundamentalism and extremism gives rise to fanaticism in all communities of religion, belief and conviction. Overcoming the tendency towards fundamentalism, extremism and fanaticism within religion is thus a common concern for all religions, a concern best addressed by religions engaging together in dialogue. Fanaticism is usually practised in the name of religious texts. Extremism and the denial of human rights, especially those of women and of local religious minorities, frequently arises from erroneous or out-of-date interpretations and applications of religious texts, that are in fact contrary to the common fundamental principles which underlie both religion and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Such erroneous readings 'should be rejected and condemned' by religious leaders in all religions (Gil-Robles, 2004, p. 40). As Martin (2001, par. 3) notes 'religious leaders should be attentive to reject false interpretations of religious tenets that offend human dignity or the unity of the human family'. The search by religious communities for 'Truth or the relativeness of truths must not lead to questioning the universality of human rights, as proclaimed strongly in the different international instruments' (Amor, 2001a, par. 28). Thus there is a need for religious traditions to re-examine their interpretation of their founding sacred texts to ensure that such interpretation is not biased by subsequent events in a manner that denies or subverts human rights. Indeed, it would be helpful if religions came to relate to the three core documents constituting the UN *International Bill of Rights* as a contemporary 'sacred' text inspired by the action of the Spirit of God in the hearts and minds of today's women and men.

Having considered some of the issues relating to the exercise of religious freedom in the public space we turn now to the expectations of the State concerning schooling in general and the character of religious education in particular. The State has valid expectations concerning the religious formation and education of its citizens wherever this occurs, be it in a church, a synagogue, a gurdwara, a temple or a mosque; be it in a common 'State' school or a faith-based school; be it during a formal time-tabled religious education lesson or during a civics, history or political studies lesson. Irrespective of whether a school is a State (public or common) school

or a faith school sponsored by a particular community of faith (Catholic, Jewish, Muslim) it carries out its work in the public space (see Looney in this section). The essential point here is that the learners entrusted to all schools, the teachers in the schools and the parents of the pupils remain citizens as well as, frequently, members of particular religious communities. And as citizens of democratic societies the education they provide or receive must always be referenced to human rights. In democratic societies those who provide religious education are therefore publicly accountable for what they provide, not just to parents and communities of faith or conviction, but also to the State for the way this impinges upon culture, human rights and citizenship.

The right of parents to a free choice of education, including the religious education, of their child is widely stated and affirmed. However this does not mean that the State has no interest in the quality of the religious education provided. Article 26, paragraph 2, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups'. The Durban Declaration (2001) notes that 'religion, spirituality and belief play a central role in the lives of millions of women and men, and in the way they live and treat other persons' (par. 8). It continues by recognising that 'religion, spirituality and belief may and can contribute to the promotion of the inherent dignity and worth of the human person and to the eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance'. Article 5 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief, in the context of a consideration of parental and family rights relating to education and religion, states:

The child shall be protected from any form of discrimination on the ground of religion or belief. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, respect for freedom of religion or belief of others, and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men (Art. 5.3).

The 2003 resolution of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the *Elimination of all forms of Religious Intolerance* called on governments to ensure that all public officials, including educators, respect religious diversity and 'cultivate respect for all religions or beliefs, thereby promoting mutual understanding and tolerance' (Art. 12).

Religious Education and Human Rights

As is clear from the first two sections of this chapter a key issue currently being addressed at both the global level (UN Commission for Human Rights) and regional level (Council of Europe) is the potential and responsibility of religious education

to enhance human rights in general and contribute in particular to the formation of tolerance and non-discrimination towards others who are different, including religiously different. Martin, stating the official position of the Roman Catholic Church, notes that 'Religious education is a powerful instrument to help believers intensify their efforts towards the realisation of the *unity of the one human family*', (2001, par. 1), and must foster 'tolerance among all for religious expression and in ensuring religious freedom for all'. Amor (2001b, par. 2) defines human rights education as:

training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes, which are directed towards:

- the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;
- the promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups;
- the enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society;
- the furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Towards a Common, Foundational Religious Education in All Schools

As already indicated, at both the level of the UN and the Council of Europe there is a call for the provision of a general 'cultural' religious education for all, (this is referred to in France as the 'teaching of religious facts', in the context of other subjects, to differentiate it, in the public school context, from faith development activities). For instance, article 4.2. of the 2003 *Opatija Declaration* considers 'the development of knowledge of history, cultures, arts and religions from school age onwards to be of central importance'. Amor (2001b, par. 3) considers that religious education should be conceived as 'a tool to transmit knowledge and values pertaining to all religious trends, in an inclusive way, so that individuals realise their being part of the same community and learn to create their own identity in harmony with identities different from their own. As such, religious education radically differs from catechism or theology, defined as the formal study of the nature of God and of the foundations of religious belief, and contributes to the wider framework of education as defined in international standards'. He notes the particular difficulty arising in those European member States in which no religious education is provided in State schools: '(w)hile the intention to create national unity by providing common schooling for all communities in a pluralist society may have been the leading criteria for such a policy, one of its results was to bequeath an almost total ignorance about religion, whether in a historical context or in an experiential way, which has created further distance among groups' (Amor, 2001b, Historical Perspectives, par. 1). The provision of a common foundational culturally

based religious education in all schools ‘provided it is neutral and objective, can make a real contribution to the prevention of intolerance and discrimination by helping pupils realise their own individual and communal cultural identity and provide ethical guidance’ (ibid., par. 2). Indeed ‘ignorance and lack of proper understanding about one’s own and one’s neighbours religion is seen as undermining the ethical commitment to human rights’ (ibid.). Since ‘mistaken religious beliefs’ and ‘misguided religious believers’ are part of the problem of the denial of human rights, religious education must be ‘part of the solution’ (Amor, 2001b). This raises substantive questions about the ‘quality and the content’ of religious education.

But would the provision of a common cultural religious education for all be in accord with the rights of parents as outlined repeatedly in international and national legal and constitutional instruments ‘to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions’ (*International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Art. 18.4)? The United Nations Human Rights Committee ‘is of the view that article 18.4 permits public school instruction in subjects such as the general history of religions and ethics if it is given in a neutral and objective way’ (quoted by Amor, 2001a, par. 32). The context in which such a ‘common, cultural’ religious education will be provided will differ both within and between States. It will respect the legal and constitutional relationship between ‘Church’ and State, the context of the schooling provided—whether ‘common’ schools or ‘faith’ schools, and the area of the curriculum in which provision can be most effectively provided (religious education, civics, philosophy, history, literature or citizenship education). Further such ‘common, cultural’ religious education is not intended to exclude other more extensive study of religion as part of the search for faith, meaning and values, but to focus and complement it. However, irrespective of the local context such religious education must be linked to values of tolerance and non-discrimination and promote human rights.

Thus within democratic societies a minimum ‘general’ level of religious education should be provided through appropriate curricular provision related to the formation of the learner as a citizen. What is proposed is that multicultural education must have a religious dimension. The premise underlying this proposal is that social cohesion will flow from an appreciation of common citizenship, with its associated rights and duties. The provision of a general religious education aims to ‘give the future citizen a global picture of religious and spiritual diversity and its manifestations’; it seeks to ensure ‘the incorporation of human rights into the teaching of religions, and for the incorporation of the religious dimension into general education’ (Gil-Robles, 2004, p. 57). Thus ‘If religious teaching ought to remain within the exclusive domain of the religions themselves, it is incumbent on schools, whether public or private, to include other aspects of religious cultures in (their) teaching, such as their history, ethics, philosophy, artistic manifestations, literature and forms of social organisation. Such subjects will contribute to an understanding of religious beliefs as they are subjectively experienced by their congregations’ (Gil-Robles, 2004, p. 57).

The Curriculum for Religious Education in Relation to Human Rights

Amor argues from an insistence that ‘mankind is ONE, despite its multiple representations’ (2001a, par. 17). He considers that a curriculum focussing on religion (or conviction) should ‘enable the child to have a more balanced outlook on religion; to be tolerant and appreciative of a wide spectrum of perspectives and particularly to acquire a more open and challenging attitude vis-à-vis other beliefs, motivations and values’ (par. 16). Religious education should aim to promote ‘tolerance and non-discrimination, the development of a balanced personality capable of dismantling the roots of extremism and the creation of a conducive environment for the full development of human dignity and human rights’ (ibid.). It should also highlight ‘the contribution of religion to human civilisation and the different cultures’ (ibid., par. 17). It is vital that within religious education attention be paid both to ‘self-representation’ and ‘the representation of others’. Such a consideration of the representation of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ cannot be done without a consideration of ‘the universality of the condition of mankind and a common human dignity’ (ibid., par. 19). There is an urgent need to develop self-awareness in such a way that the ‘others’ are indeed ‘us’ (ibid., par. 22). Amor quotes Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former UN Secretary-General, that ‘(h)uman rights, when viewed from a universal perspective, force us to face the most demanding of all dialectics: the dialectics of identity and otherness, of ‘self’ and ‘other’. They teach us, in the most direct way, that we are, at one and the same time, the same and different’ (quoted by Amor, 2003, par. 119).

Amor’s words ring true in the hearts of those with a concern for authentic religious, spiritual and moral development. The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales insists that ‘to claim a right for myself means my claiming it for others too’ (1998, par 5). At their best, religion, spirituality and morality share a common attribute, the invitation to personal transcendence. Their development essentially follows the same path, the journey from egocentricity to otherness, with altruism and compassion as guides. Full human development involves a life-long journey from an exclusive concern with the self to an openness towards the ‘other’. The invitation to form relationships between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ involves an opening of the ‘self’ towards the mystery and presence of the ‘other’—the mystery of the ‘other’ that is paradoxically at the heart of the ‘self’, the mystery of every human ‘other’, the mystery of the ‘otherness’ of the cosmic universe, and, for the person of religious faith, the mystery of the Ultimate ‘Other’.

Intercultural Dialogue: A Core Methodology

The 2003 *Opatija Declaration* of the Council of Europe states that the term ‘inter-cultural dialogue’ ‘defines tools used to promote and protect the concept of cultural democracy, and encompasses the tangible and intangible elements likely to foster all forms of cultural diversity, manifesting themselves in multiple identities whether individual or collective, in transformations and in new forms of cultural expression. Intercultural dialogue must extend to every possible component of culture, without

exception, whether these be cultural in the strict sense or political, economic, social, philosophical, or religious. In this context, for instance, inter-faith and inter-religious dialogue must be viewed in terms of its cultural and social implications versus the public sphere' (*Opatija Declaration*, 2003, Appendix). To be effective such intercultural dialogue 'cannot be limited to dialogue about convergence, but should extend to dialogue about what separates cultures and populations . . . (both) should be explored in order to start a true dialogue' (*ibid.*). When used as a methodology within religious education other general ground-rules for intercultural dialogue can be identified. The dialogue should take place in the public space that is common to all citizens, the agenda is to be set by a consideration of human rights, each participating faith community must be free to articulate its self-understanding of what it means to be human (both individually and socially) in the context of their core beliefs and commitments, and each participant should seek to represent the other in such a way that the other can recognise himself or herself in that representation.

A framework for inter-religious dialogue that has potential for adaptation for use in the context of intercultural dialogue within religious education is that proposed by the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue. This is a four-phase cumulative framework that moves from the 'dialogue of life' (based on the experience of friendship and respect), to the 'dialogue of action' (based on working together for justice and shared ethical and social objectives), to the 'dialogue of religious experience' (a sharing of spiritual riches between and within religious cultures', and only finally to a 'theoretical dialogue' (that discusses questions of belief and doctrine). The approach is grounded in common anthropological concerns that have the potential to bring religious traditions together rather than in doctrinal dispute that has the potential to drive religious traditions further apart. Such 'theoretical dialogue' includes not just doctrinal questions relating to the nature of God and human salvation but key theological issues such as the grounds of human dignity and human rights, the nature of the secular and its relationship to the sacred, and the relationship between revelation, authority and religious diversity.

Conclusion

For those with a strong faith commitment or those who exercise their right to enrol their child in a faith school for purposes of nurture within a particular faith tradition, the above outline of a common foundational 'cultural' religious education linked to human rights will not be regarded as sufficient. What is outlined above is not intended to be sufficient, simply necessary. It is to be regarded as a minimum to be provided for all pupils, of all religions and none, within the context of common citizenship. But the minimum acceptable outcomes for the religiously educated person, irrespective of the context or extent of that education, is a person who relates his or her personal religion or conviction to the authentic values of democratic society, who is religious or convinced in a manner that is tolerant towards and deeply appreciative of the 'other', who exercises her or his right to religious freedom in a moderate way that is in solidarity with the right of others, particularly members of

minority religions, to religious freedom, and who is committed to active citizenship, locally, nationally and globally. To achieve this religious education must uphold and promote human rights, reflect critically upon the contribution of religion to democratic society, see the various religious heritages of humankind as a shared heritage, assist the learner to critique his or her personal religious culture (or culture of conviction) and actively engage in inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue. At all times religious education should seek to emphasise 'the public character of religion, the prophetic side of faith, and the social dimension of morality' (Mater Dei Institute, 2003). The school itself, as a culture, must model the values, freedoms and responsibilities that it wishes to promote in wider society. Schools must therefore be places that are hospitable to the varieties of faith and conviction in pluralist cultures and explicitly address faith-related difference. The task is urgent and the policy implications for religious education far-reaching. Meeting these objectives will require selflessness, solidarity and a common vision on the part of all involved.

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THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN PROMOTING INTER-RELIGIOUS AND INTER-CULTURAL DIALOGUE

Sandra Cullen

Mater Dei Institute, Dublin City University

Introduction

The title of this chapter assumes that the school has a role to play in promoting inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue in multi-faith and multi-cultural environments. It also assumes that such dialogue is a value to be aspired to. The word 'dialogue' has generally come to mean an exchange of ideas or opinions between equals. It may be characterised by a willingness to learn about something or someone new. As a mutual listening and questioning, it assumes reciprocity, understanding, honesty, trust, openness, intellectual and affective engagement, self knowledge, commitment and respect for the other as a person; in short, it assumes that there is a pre-existing openness to entering into relationship with another. When we examine the word as it has been used in inter-religious dialogue then we see that the conditions for dialogue demand an advanced owning of and critique of one's own tradition and perspective as well as a high degree of tolerance for the other (Donnelly, 2003, pp.133–145). Can schools be expected to achieve this? Is such a task even appropriate for the school as an educational community? Or are we setting the bar too high? Perhaps if we consider why we value dialogue then we may come to some understanding of what schools can realistically aim for.

The sound of the school bell alerts the local community that a new academic year has begun. What does that sound herald for the twenty-eight students who have been randomly assigned to class 1C? In a multi-faith and multi-cultural environment, class 1C will come from an increasingly non-homogenous social, cultural and religious background into a school system that is only beginning to come to terms with the most appropriate ways to acknowledge diversity, often seeing difference as something to be feared, or at best, a challenge to be faced. How will the students in 1C experience school? What is the role of the school in the lives of

this particular cohort of students? What will this multi-faith and multi-cultural environment mean for their teachers and the decisions they will make about these students?

A school may well be described as a microcosm of the wider society in which it exists; as such, it reflects the concerns, ideals and prejudices of that society. The school is not a *tabula rasa*. Its identity is shaped by the historical, cultural, social, religious and educational expectations of its particular context. On the other hand, we assume that education, as it occurs in schools, has a shaping role in the way that societies develop. A result of this dynamic is that schools have become something of a melting pot into which is thrown the expectation that all of society's issues can be addressed if we could just sort out what happens in the school. In their *Intercultural Guidelines for Schools*, The Irish National Teachers' Organisation acknowledges that: 'Education holds the key to developing an inclusive society where social diversity and cultural differences can be respected, promoted and practised... Schools that reflect and affirm diversity of cultures, ethnicity and religious background will help children from ethnic minorities to feel valued, accepted and supported' (INTO, 2002). It is to the school that society looks when it begins to address the issues raised by the reality of multiculturalism.

It is naïve to expect that inter-cultural education happens easily. Though a school will subscribe to the ideals of such education, serious issues present themselves in light of the resources available to the school. What happens when those '*out there*' become '*one of us*'? What happens when teachers have to be redeployed to teach English as a second language? How do teachers handle conflict between pupils or with parents about what is happening in the school? How do schools draw up and implement policies about uniform, religious symbols or the celebration of feasts and festivals? How do schools facilitate the encounter between the dominant group and minorities but also between varieties of minority groups? How do schools re-define their ethos when traditions held sacred by the school no longer match the landscape of fact about the identity of the school? As these issues impact on the everyday running of the school there is a need to consider that in expecting schools to engage in a sustained inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue we may be investing in them a role that may well be beyond the capacity of the school as an institution. There is a need for society to establish both the responsibilities of the school and the limits of its involvement in such dialogue.

The Argument from Expedience

We take as a given that dialogue is a value worth pursuing, though we can contend that there are two arguments as to why this is so. The first and perhaps most common assumption is the recognition of the necessity for dialogue or what we may call *the argument from expedience*. The argument is often made that because religion plays such a role in hostilities between peoples then inter-religious dialogue should be able to go some way towards solving some of these conflicts. The same may be said of cultural differences. The thinking is that the more we know about another

then the less of a stranger they will be. It makes sense for the world to be at peace, for people to strive for some sort of harmony. It is expedient for us to get along! We find this argument well articulated in the words of Pope John Paul II in his message for World Day of Peace 2001:

I therefore consider it urgent to invite believers in Christ, together with all men and women of good will, to *reflect on the theme of dialogue between cultures and traditions*. This dialogue is the obligatory path to the building of a reconciled world, a world able to look with serenity to its own future. This is a theme which is crucial to the pursuit of peace' (John Paul II, 1st January 2001).

Monika Hellwig outlines the three goals of such dialogue: (1) friendly understanding; (2) to enrich one's own faith; and (3) to establish a more solid foundation for community life and action (Hellwig, 1990, p.51). Perhaps we should understand Hellwig's goals as a minimum otherwise there is the danger that we never really enter into the mindset of another so as to truly understand them, with the result that meaningful encounter is denied to us. A danger inherent in the *argument from expedience* is that all difference is minimised and becomes a benign neutrality where sameness is celebrated in a homogeneity of accents, dress, cultural references and values - a 'one culture fits all' mentality. If the goal of dialogue remains at this level then we run the risk of superficial engagement in a pseudo dialogue for fear of upsetting others.

The Argument from our Shared Humanity

Maybe the argument from expedience provides a laudable reason for dialogue, but I believe that the justification for dialogue must come from another source if it is to be truly humanising for all engaged in it. I suggest that we look instead to the *argument from our shared humanity* as the basis for dialogue. We dialogue because we are people. We dialogue, to use the words of David Tracy in his reflection on pluralism:

... as a responsible and fruitful option because it allows (indeed demands) that we develop better ways as selves, as communities of inquirers, as societies, as cultures, as an inchoately global culture to allow for more possibilities to enrich our personal and communal lives (Tracy, 1987, quoted by Donnelly, 2003, p. 134).

Catholic reflection on education emphasises the relational nature of the person, 'the existence of a person appears therefore as a call to the duty to exist for one another'; from this, 'the human person experiences his (her) humanity to the extent that he (she) is able to participate in the humanity of the other' (Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools, 2002, par. 35–36; McGrady, 2003). We engage in dialogue with another because of an innate respect for the life of the other.

The dignity of every person with their views, opinions, beliefs, values, cultural assumptions, faith stories, religious practices, and life experience is honoured. Our respect for the life of the other leads us to delight in the richness of cultural differences. For the Catholic school this means celebrating that 'Christ plays in ten thousand places' (Hopkins). From this perspective dialogue is a profoundly humanising activity.

When we shift the focus to this second rationale for dialogue then it is perhaps possible to consider that instead of the school being expected to create the type of dialogue that would solve the problems created by difference, the emphasis is placed more on the school being a place where dignity is respected in and of itself, so that the school becomes a safe place for all who are part of the educational community. As a place that respects the dialogue that emerges from honouring the dignity of the person then the school has the chance to be a place 'where redemptive forms of society can be experimented with and offered to the modern world as alternative styles of life' (Nouwen, 1991).

Entering into a Conversation

At this point I want to take a step back from the title in order to suggest that perhaps for schools, the promotion of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue is too lofty an ideal and that what schools should be aiming for is to prepare the ground for such dialogue but not assume that facilitating such dialogue is within their remit. To achieve this within the parameters of school, I suggest that we shift the focus from dialogue to conversation. Using the *argument from shared humanity* allows us to begin this conversation not from the sharing of ideas but in the encounter with people. People are innately curious about other people, young people even more so; it is natural to want to find out about others. In the everydayness of our lives we do this through conversation – the flow of the chat that happens between people, the hubbub of the school yard, the quiet chats at lunchtime, the instructional voice of the teacher, the directed talk of a group discussion. Conversation breaks down barriers as it is about swapping the small details and sharing the small intimacies of everyday living, allowing us glimpses into the life of another person. Using the language of liberation theology, I suggest that dialogue is a second step activity; it is what happens when the sun goes down on a conversation that has been allowed to flourish. Establishing conversation as the first step in this process strikes me as being the most appropriate approach for children and young people who are only beginning to establish and name their own identity and so need the fluidity that conversation allows rather than the advanced critique essential for dialogue.

The primary task of the school is to provide a safe space for the promotion of learning. What constitutes that learning is multifaceted but an aspect to keep in mind for our purposes is the relational learning that occurs within school communities. Most people will tell you that what they remember most about school are their friends, the attitudes of teachers and the atmosphere of the school. Much of

what is learned in school is not what is necessarily on the explicit curriculum but is what is carried in the air of the school. It is with an attentiveness to this significant aspect of school life that it is possible for schools to teach what Burbules calls 'the communicative virtues' of perseverance, patience, receptivity to criticism, ability to be critical of another, self-control and the willingness to be a good listener (Burbules, 1993, p. 42). Establishing such virtues or skills prepares the ground for the type of dialogue outlined in Leonard Swidler's 'Decalogue for Dialogue' (Swidler, 1983, pp. 1–4). In this Decalogue, Swidler states that the primary purpose of dialogue is to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality and then to act accordingly. This dialogue must be a two-sided project – within each religious community and between religious communities. Each participant must come to the dialogue with complete honesty and sincerity and assume a similar complete honesty and sincerity in the other partners. Each participant must define what it means to be a member of his/her own tradition; conversely, the one defined must be able to recognise him/herself in the interpretation. Each participant must come to the dialogue with no hard-and-fast assumptions as to where the points of disagreement are. Dialogue can take place only between equals on the basis of mutual trust and participants must be at least minimally self-critical of both themselves and their own religious traditions. Finally, Swidler states that each participant must eventually attempt to experience the partner's religion from within.

If we place Swidler's tenth commandment in the context of our emphasis on conversation then we may suggest that the establishing of relationships of trust and friendship is the beginning of the possibility of experiencing another's religion or culture from within. One way of beginning such a conversation is to engage with the *argument from our shared humanity* and adopt what literary critic Patricia Spacks calls a 'gossip strategy' (Belenky, 1986, p. 116). Gossip, as understood by Spacks, is about swapping stories so as to build the foundations of friendship. Much of the conversation we have with those we associate with consists of 'small shared truths' that are concerned with the particular and the personal, sometimes even the petty, this does not mean that such activity is trivial as it has the possibility of getting to the heart of things. Gossip, as the sharing of small intimacies, is grounded in the argument from shared humanity. Gossip, evidenced in those long late night conversations, is built on trust and builds trust. It follows its own rhythms and has no discernible end point or purpose. The conversation that emerges from such intimacies is a recognition that it is possible to engage meaningfully in the life of another person.

In establishing the task of the school as promoting conversation one must be conscious that this does not become unstructured babble. To be faithful to educational principles, such conversation must engage pupils intellectually as well as affectively. The central purpose of the school is to be a formal educational community, as such, its primary learning space is the classroom where students are invited into a conversation with the texts, traditions and founding stories of their own cultural and religious traditions as well as into conversation with other

conversation partners. The role of the teacher is to direct the conversation that occurs in this space. McGrady argues:

At its best a classroom can be regarded as constituting a community of discourse, a distinctive learning space in which linguistic fluency is actively constructed through ongoing 'speech acts' originating in dialogue with the faith tradition of the sponsoring religious community. Such 'speech acts' require a vocabulary, a topic, a set of utterances (articulation) and an ongoing conversation between linguistic partners' (McGrady, 2002, p. 24).

The teacher both participates in and conducts the conversation. As the conductor, the teacher's task is to ensure that there is a safe space for conversation between students, between students and teacher, between students and the wider school. Mc Grady's proposal that we consider the classroom as a community of discourse or conversation is confirmed by Martin Kennedy's incisive observation that, in the Irish context, 'the classroom is a place of positive religious discourse and experience' while 'the home is a space where there is little or no religious discourse and experience' and 'the parish is a space of diminishing religious discourse and experience' (Kennedy, 2000, p. 3). The classroom as the significant learning space of the school has a role to play in the creation of the conditions for dialogue. The caveat is that there are times when the linguistic fluency proposed by McGrady becomes nothing other than a dissonant babble, a clamouring for attention, voices competing for airtime but nobody present to offer the listening ear that is the other side of conversation and subsequently of dialogue. Swidler's assertion that we have moved 'from an age of monologue to an age of dialogue' might be too naïve in a world of globalisation that increasingly celebrates the one who can shout loudest, the one whose monologue drowns out all other voices.

In establishing conversation as the central contribution that a school can make to the task of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, I am not suggesting that the school is confined to that role. By its very nature the school imagines and creates an environment that is hospitable to the possibility of dialogue. The conditions for dialogue that the school can create and support include the recognition of the worthwhile nature of critical inquiry undertaken in a way that is supportive of all traditions in partnership with home, society and religious traditions, and open to the student's self-articulation of what is of value to them. The introduction of the (Republic of Ireland's) Department of Education and Science's Syllabi for Religious Education is a welcome attempt to put a structure on these aims (see www.materdei.ie/logos). All of these conditions can be promoted and supported by the school's attention to its explicit, implicit and null curricula. According to Eliot Eisner (Eisner, 1979, pp. 74–92) all institutions teach three curricula. In a school the explicit curriculum is the one set down in mission statements, school rules, syllabi and brochures. It is the articulation of what the school intends to stand for. In contrast to that the implicit curriculum refers to the patterns and organisations that are adopted to carry out the explicit mission. Under this implicit curriculum are such issues as the way we design buildings, the employment and allocation of staff,

timetabling decisions, the priorities set by management, decisions about uniforms and rules. It is in the implicit curriculum that the stated ethos of a school lives or dies. The third curriculum is the null curriculum, which may be described as what is left out of the school's other curricula. It is what a school does not attend to either by choice or by accident, or by its action or inaction. Such areas may include a denial of a changing student profile, a non-questioning acceptance of inadequate facilities or a non-engagement in the realities of teaching in a multi-faith and multi-cultural environment. The challenge facing schools in our new environment is to audit the school in terms of how these three curricula shape its identity.

Conclusion

To speak of the school having a role in inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue suggests that it has a function or part to perform in a particular operation or process. Does society have a sense of what that process is? Has society begun to envisage what a multi-faith and multi-cultural environment will look like? It is only when this vision is clearly articulated that the participants in the process can have any sense of the responsibilities and limits of what they have to contribute to the process. The onus is on the wider culture to reflect on what it sees as the purpose and nature and scope of dialogue. The key word in our title may well be 'promoting'. If we take the idea of 'promoting' as contributing to the growth or prosperity of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue then we can be more realistic about what schools can do. The task of the school will be the promotion of a conversation, emerging from our shared humanity, that is the precursor of a life-giving dialogue.

So where does all of this leave the students and teachers of 1C? Their experience of their conversation with each other, with other students, with teachers, management and ancillary staff as well as the quality of the material that is presented as worthy of study will shape their attitude to the possibility of dialogue. The school as a place of learning must attempt to be a place where friendships are established, diversity is celebrated and the conversational rhythms open up the possibility of learning with, from and for each other.

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AGREED SYLLABUSES: THEIR HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLAND AND WALES, 1944–2004

Jack Priestley

University of Exeter, U.K.

Introduction

To write a history of the development of Agreed Syllabuses of Religious Education in England and Wales seemed, at first sight, to be a simple enough task. But a moment's reflection was enough to realise that it presented the usual problems and questions of writing any history. Where should one begin? What are the antecedents against which success or otherwise is to be judged? How wide or narrow is the appropriate context within which they are to be explored and what are likely to be the main relevant issues to an international readership scattered around the world?

Let me start at London Airport, the point at which most visitors from overseas obtain their first impression of Britain. It is contained within the London Borough of Hounslow, itself an L.E.A. or Local Education Authority, responsible for drawing up and implementing its own Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education. It was in 2001 that I was invited to give the annual lecture to the authority's Standing Advisory Conference on Religious Education (SACRE). I was greeted by the chairman who introduced himself to me as a secular humanist. He then asked if he might make an announcement before my lecture began. There were some seventy people present, a total mixture of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, Buddhists and Christians of all varieties. The announcement was that their new Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education had gone through its final stage of approval that same afternoon after three years of discussion and argument. The room exploded in a prolonged outburst of enthusiastic applause and self-congratulation. This should have been national news. Had these groups failed to agree, had they fallen out completely and resorted to acrimony I have no doubt that it would have been headline news in the next day's papers. What I was witnessing was a process by which diverse, first and second generation immigrants, together with representatives of what would, until recently,

have been regarded as a defensive or even hostile host community, had agreed about what they wanted their own children to be taught in religious education as they grew up together. But there was, of course, no news coverage at all: *disharmony* and conflict is what sells newspapers. However, it seemed to me then, as it does now, that this piece of social legislation, first created as a legal requirement in the darkest days of the Second World War, must be regarded as one of the most successful innovations ever to have been put on the British statute book. Only now, sixty years on, is its future beginning to be questioned. To make some assessment of whether that is a positive or a negative development it is necessary to go back, however briefly, to the basic historical questions with which I began.

Religion in a Dis-United Kingdom

Religious Education has never had to be added to the educational programmes of the U.K. It has been there from the beginning, in that it was the Christian churches, which created education in any formal sense at all. What distinguishes Britain from many other countries, such as the U.S.A., is that the subject has never been removed. Rather it continues to influence curriculum matters and the very systems that contain them.

To understand just why syllabuses had to be agreed at all is to delve into the complex history of the British Isles. At the beginning of the twenty-first century it is at last becoming natural to talk about British religion and British religious education but the perpetual identity crisis, which is the hallmark of these islands, continues to confuse even its own citizens. In international football competitions there are four recognised countries, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which individually compete against the likes of Brazil, Germany and Japan. But when it comes to competitions like the Olympic Games the entity becomes Great Britain, which includes the first three of those countries but not Northern Ireland. When, in other contexts, it does include Northern Ireland, then the country becomes formally known as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, or the U.K. for short.

The relevance of all this is that religion, historically, has been at the very heart of these divisions and, whilst reforms have come about over the centuries, anomalies remain. For example, the monarch is the nominal Chief Executive of the Church of England, technically appointing the bishops, but s/he also occupies a similar position in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, directly appointing the High Commissioner of its General Assembly, although the two churches are not in communion with one another. The Episcopal Church of Scotland *is* part of the international Anglican Communion but is not established, (i.e. does not enjoy the royal prerogative) north of the border. In Northern Ireland the situation is just as complex. There the Roman Catholic Archbishopric is of all Ireland, despite the fact that it is made up of two quite separate countries, while the Protestant churches are organised within national borders. In this sort of complex, often nonsensical situation, agreement of any sort has been difficult to come by down the ages. Education, for its part, has been

organised along the lines of three divisions with England and Wales seen as one entity. In the midst of all this there lies the traditional divisions between Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Nonconformist Christianity, now joined by a whole variety of other world religions.

The Forgotten Years

The first Education Act for England and Wales was passed in 1870. Under it, elementary education was made compulsory for the first time and within that compulsion was not only arithmetic and basic literacy, but also religious education. The reason for that was itself historical to the point of being conceptually assumed. The demand for compulsory education had been growing for the best part of a century and its catalyst had been the Sunday School Movement which, from the time of Robert Raikes' 1780 initiative, had used the Bible as its basic text book for the simultaneous teaching of both religion and literacy, often with as much emphasis on the latter as on the former, to the point, rarely acknowledged in the history books, that students were often 'discharged' with the gift of a Bible when they had achieved basic literacy skills (Cliff, 1986, pp. 5 & 63).

But nervousness had remained about schism and denominational conflict, so that for many schools the teaching consisted of nothing more than uncritical reading, a verse at a time round the class, of the text from the 1611, Authorised, King James' version of the Bible. Even this was seen as a possible area of conflict, so that a clause was introduced, making it compulsory that the Scripture lesson must take place either first thing in the morning or last thing in the afternoon. The unforeseen consequence of this was that all teachers were occupied with the subject simultaneously and that, therefore, there was no possibility of specialist teachers for this subject when they began to appear elsewhere in the curriculum.

The 1944 Act was to change all that but it did so because of more enlightened policies initiated at local level during the 1920s. The first local authority to produce its own syllabus was the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1923 ('Riding' is an old word meaning an administrative region within a larger entity: Yorkshire, the largest County in England has three), followed immediately by the very influential County of Cambridgeshire in 1924. It was this latter initiative which was to prove the more influential on national government policy in the long term. The County decided to revise its syllabus in 1937, a process which took over two years to complete, so that the Second World War had already begun before it was issued. It, therefore, was to have a huge influence on central government policy and for two reasons. First, was the timing, in that Prime Minister Winston Churchill was to delegate the task of complete Educational Reform for post-war Britain to a young subordinate minister, R.A. 'Rab' Butler, himself a Cambridge graduate and Member of Parliament for a nearby constituency. Secondly, there were the powerful national figures of influence within the committee drawn up to produce the syllabus. It was chaired by Sir William Spens, Master of Corpus Christi College, who, in the earliest stages, was simultaneously chairing a major government committee, which

was producing what was to become known as 'The Spens Report' (Spens, 1938) on secondary education, with special reference to grammar and technical high schools. That national report, published in 1938, contained a whole sub-section under the heading of 'Scripture' which contained the following statements:

- (a) 'The fact that during recent years it has been found possible in so many parts of the country to use agreed syllabuses of religious instruction in public elementary schools provided by Local Education Authorities is one of the many signs which encourages us to hope that a problem which has been solved with a considerable success in the Primary school may be found equally capable of solution in the later stages of school life' (p. 206).
- (b) 'no boy or girl can be counted properly educated unless he or she has been made aware of the fact of the existence of a religious interpretation of life' (p. 208).

Agreed Syllabuses did not, therefore, suddenly appear in the 1944 Education Act as is often assumed to be the case. What that Act did, in effect, was to make binding what had been practised in much of the country for as much as twenty years before the Second World War and was, like so much social legislation in Britain, provoked initially by the events of the 1914-18 conflict and then reinforced by the later one.

No other Agreed Syllabus committee, however, could have been as politically influential as this pre-war Cambridgeshire one. Spens himself was Master of a Cambridge University College. He was joined by four other similar heads of Cambridge colleges, seven university professors of theology and heads of theological and teacher training colleges, together with Basil Yeaxlee from the Oxford University Education department and head-teachers from a variety of schools. Most of these people were scholars. Even so it comes as something of a surprise to many in the 21st century to discover that in the first half of the 20th century, nearly seventy years ago, schoolchildren were being faced with what we still term 'modern scholarship' with an openness which is less common now than it was then. For example, Section 3 of this 1939 syllabus was headed 'History, Legend and Myth' and stressed the importance of distinguishing between them in the Biblical narrative, stating:

'A legend starts from events that happened, but contains elements which are not factually true, though they may throw light upon the meaning which was attached to the events. A myth is a story which did not begin with events at all, but clothes in imaginative form ideas in men's (*sic*) minds' (Cambridgeshire, 1939, p. 122).

It is seen as part of education's essential task to show these different ways of expressing truth as well as of showing their connection with the notion of belief.

On the religious front, as distinct from the political and academic influences, one Church figure in England stood out above all others during those two inter-war decades. It was in 1921 that William Temple became Bishop of Manchester.

Despite his very privileged background (his father had been Archbishop of Canterbury) Temple took an intense interest in social reforms of many kinds, becoming the first ever Bishop of the Church of England to join the fledgling Labour Party. He convened the major COPEC conference (Conference on Politics, Economics and Citizenship) in 1925, bringing together civic and church leaders of many denominations to look at key problems in all those areas, but along with ecumenicity, it was Education, which, captured his interest and concern. He became convenor of the Education Forum at the great 1928 international meeting of the Jerusalem Missionary Conference (the forerunner of the World Council of Churches) and wrote the report on it to go with the other nine volumes from the meeting. Along with all his other writings this has long since gone out of fashion, as well as out of print, but it was to pave the way for what was to come into being nearly twenty years later and it did so, in Temple's mind, from an international perspective (see Priestley, 1991).

Political Implementation

By 1942 Temple had risen, like his father, to become Archbishop of Canterbury but his passion for Education and a whole mass of other social concerns remained undimmed and he was to form a close and highly creative relationship with Butler in creating what was to become the 1944 Education Act, overcoming, in this one curriculum area, Prime Minister Churchill's insistence that in a free society, syllabuses were a matter for teachers and examination boards, not governments. Religious Education became the one exception but, nevertheless, as much diversity as possible remained the order of the day. Agreed Syllabuses became statutory for all, but the decisions lay at local governmental level and not with any national body. Only now, some sixty years later, is this beginning to be questioned and becoming once again a contentious issue. However, it was Butler's genius in establishing a mechanism, which was to be the main factor in its success. Each local authority was compelled by law to create an Agreed Syllabus Conference, which was to consist of four panels. These were: the Church of England; Other Religious Denominations; the Local Authority itself (i.e. elected councillors or those appointed by them) and 'teachers through their organisations' (i.e. Teacher Unions). At that point Butler inserted a small additional point which was to prove absolutely crucial. These four groups had to agree unanimously. There was to be no majority voting by which one could be outvoted by the other three and, furthermore, if the four could not agree then, at that point, central government would take it out of the hands of the Local Authority and impose a solution. In sixty years of practice this has never happened. The threat of central government intervention was enough.

Cultural and Contentious Issues—Worship and Citizenship

While the Bible was the largest component of common ground between the Christian denominations which constituted the great bulk of religious life in the country at the time, the word 'Christian' was not used in the legislation, although it was

widely used within the syllabuses themselves. Their numbers were small but Butler was much more aware than most Parliamentarians of the time that there were significant Jewish communities in parts of the country. He was also aware that the Bible permeated many other areas of national life in addition to the specifically religious. He knew it was not possible to understand and interpret the contents of most art galleries, to embark on the study of much English literature or even of its language without fairly detailed Biblical knowledge. Nevertheless, there was a tacit assumption on the part of the syllabus makers that one of the main purposes of Religious Education was to impart the Christian faith in a Christian country. This can be seen quite clearly, as Cox records, in explicit preamble statements such as, ‘knowledge of the common Christian faith held by their fathers for 2000 years’ (Surrey) and leading them to ‘a life of worship and service in the Christian Community’ (Sunderland)’ (Cox, 1984, p. 19).

This matter was further complicated by the inclusion in the 1944 Act of the requirement for a daily act of worship in schools. Some Religious Education teachers attempted from the beginning to distance the teaching of the subject in the classroom from this daily requirement in the school hall but with limited success. But perhaps already we find it difficult to get back into the mindset of two generations ago when the Education debate was based on the premise of, ‘educating to be’ rather than our more modern, ‘teaching and learning’. Both are always present but perhaps the difference over half a century is that the proportionality between the two has changed quite markedly. Be that as it may, some commentators had no doubt that, ‘so far as Butler was concerned school worship constituted an element in the religious education provided by schools’ (Souper, 1983, p. 3). The same authors go on to give many examples of the widespread acceptance of, not just the inclusion, but also the dominance of religious education in its broadest sense over the whole Educational debate. For example they quote Prime Minister Winston Churchill himself as stating quite openly that, ‘religion has been a rock in the life and character of the British people upon which they have built their hopes and cast their cares. This fundamental element must never be taken from our schools . . .’ (Times, 22nd March, 1943, quoted by Souper and Kay, 1983, p. 10).

Perhaps what is most surprising, in retrospect, is that it was not seen at all as a major controversial issue. Religious Education, School Worship and Citizenship were regarded as a contiguous whole. There was no great public discussion; rather, as Freathy (2005) has pointed out, in dealing specifically with the Citizenship issue, the process was one of ‘parallel discourses’, taking place within the higher echelons of what is termed ‘the Establishment’, that close-knit social elite, almost entirely drawn from the ancient public (private, fee-paying) schools, who dominated the leadership of the country’s major institutions like the Civil Service, Government and the Church of England. There is little evidence of any formal meetings. Out of these informal conversations Archbishop Temple emerged as the most influential figure so that both worship and citizenship matters became regarded as incorporated within the legislation on Religious Education.

This then is the context in which Agreed Syllabuses have to be judged. Their development is full of irony. Over a period of some sixty years they change from servicing the only subject which has to be taught, to being the only subject which was free from control by central government, although that is, for the first time, seriously under consideration as I write. We might also add that religious education in England and Wales, had, under this 1944 legislation, to be taught but it did not have to be learned. From the beginning there had always been included a conscience clause, although in practice the only group to have consistently exercised this right of withdrawal has been the Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Changing Content and Style of Agreed Syllabuses

It is possible to discern three fairly clearly demarcated stages of change and development over the fifty-year period between 1944 and 1994 with possibly a fourth emerging. Significantly, all have been gradual. Because there has been no centralised control, change has often come from one initiative within one particular authority, which, in some instances, was facing a new challenge, not necessarily shared by others. As a result this process of change and development has often been slow and varied but it has been thorough and has involved very large numbers of people. For that reason it has been a highly democratic process and although, with one important exception, it has scarcely ever been noticed by the news media, it has been consistently successful.

In the mid 1940s Britain, along with the whole of Europe, was in a state of turmoil. Looking back now it is quite remarkable that with towns and cities barely functioning amidst the debris of bombing; with industry in chaos, communications difficult and with hundreds of thousands of men still in the armed services and families disrupted, Local Government agencies up and down the country turned their attention, among all these other problems, to creating syllabuses of religious education. But they complied and, in the main, with great willingness. For many of them it was a crucial part of the reconstruction of a civilised way of life.

As we have seen there were already authorities which had given serious thought to the task before the war and, while each of the 165 local authorities of the time (there are far fewer now) were responsible for creating their own syllabus there was no hindrance to drawing on the ideas of others. What has to be remembered, above all, however, was the newness of this whole enterprise. Schools, not civil servants or local government officers, created syllabuses. But, there were far more church schools in the 1940s than exist today and there was a general feeling that, for this area of study, church people must take the lead, and that what was to be taught in school should correspond with what took place in churches. The problem, of course, was that churches differed in their emphases and the centuries-old divisions between Protestants and Catholics, between the Established Church of England and Nonconformity were still there. The great common ground, however, was the shared story to which all of them held and which dominated the common culture, namely that of the Bible. Moreover,

there were already examples which could be drawn upon, such as those of West Riding and Cambridgeshire that we have already noted.

The Bible-Based Syllabuses

Nevertheless, it was a huge undertaking for groups of people from these various backgrounds, many of whom had viewed one another with mutual suspicion and mistrust over the generations, to come together and was, of itself, a major ecumenical exercise. Moreover, the recognition and acceptance of modern scholarship, so clearly seen in the pre-war Cambridgeshire syllabus was to be widely accepted. There were no concessions to what today might be called 'fundamentalist' or 'literalist' groups. For example, the highly influential London Syllabus (London, 1947) contains an article under the heading, 'Is the Bible true?' (p. 145) It refers back to its own approach to the Old Testament (p. 88) and spells out the need to deal with the different forms of truth contained in this *library* of books, emphasising the need to teach that, 'historical accuracy is not the only kind of truth', and affirming that, 'eternal truths may be expressed through poetry, myth, fiction or any other type of literature'. In another section the syllabus also faces up squarely to the relationship between education and belief, arguing that it cannot be swept under the carpet and indeed that the discovery of what believing means is, 'an integral part of healthy, normal, religious development', itself a quite explicit and valid area of study (p. 121), involving elements of learning, investigation, examination, criticism and personal identification before any act of mental decision can or should be made. Although their space was limited and although study of them was largely restricted to the top end of the secondary school it was never true that religions other than those represented in the Bible were ignored. In addition to including notes on, among others, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam the London syllabus of 1947 also included references to Gnosticism and the Mystery Religions.

London, as might be expected, produced one of the more comprehensive syllabuses. Others were much smaller but nevertheless, original and produced locally. Their contents were fairly similar but it is important to note that they were not just Bible study but rather, 'Bible-based', covering a whole range of moral and social questions, especially for Secondary schools. To take just one example the rural, south-western County of Devon devoted some twenty of its 95 pages to personal and social problems, including, 'What is a good citizen?' (Devon, 1944, pp. 75–95).

A significant number of authorities borrowed wholesale or adapted from somewhere else. A survey carried out by the Institute of Christian Education in 1954, listing all the Local Authorities of England and Wales, showed that while the London syllabus had proved fairly popular it had not been adopted as much as those of Cambridgeshire, Sunderland, Surrey and the West Riding. Finally there were those who chose to amalgamate what were judged to be the best parts of more than one syllabus, such as Eastbourne which registered, '*Infants: Surrey. Others: Sunderland*' or Oxford, 'Middlesex [with West Riding for introduction and section on worship]' (I.C.E. 1954. Appendix 1, pp. 143–148).

From Bible Centred to Child Centred

Twenty two years later, in 1966, the West Riding of Yorkshire produced a completely new form of syllabus. Indeed, the word 'syllabus' did not appear at all in the main title, which was simply, '*Suggestions* (my emphasis) for Religious Education' (West Riding, 1966). Its publication marked a new stage in syllabus development, one, which, along with other subjects at the time, heralded a growing recognition of the professionalism of teachers together with an acknowledgement of the status of pupils. The idea of child-centredness had been around for a long time but, until this point, had never been officially acknowledged in other than private educational initiatives. Here, however, the official publication from a public authority began with the well-known 1686 statement from the English philosopher John Locke (entitled 'Children and the Bible') beginning:

'As for the Bible, which children are usually employed in, to exercise and improve their talent in reading, I think the promiscuous reading of it through all the chapters as they lie in order, so far from being of any advantage to children, either for the perfecting of their reading or principling their religion, that perhaps a worse could not be found.'

And ending with the words,

'And what and odd jumble of thoughts must a child have in his head, if he have any at all, such as he should have concerning religion, who in his tender age reads all the parts of the Bible indifferently, as the word of God, without any other distinction! I am apt to think that this, in some men, has been the very reason why they never had clear and distinct thoughts of it all their lifetime' (quoted, West Riding, p. ix).

The volume, distributed to all schools in the Authority begins with a short statement to teachers headed, 'The Agreed Syllabus: Underlying Principles.' It is interesting to note that (in contrast with those given to teachers in England and Wales some forty years later) 'getting through the syllabus', it argues, 'must no longer be regarded as the teacher's main purpose.' 'To teach a little, to teach it well, to ensure that it is the right material for the age of the pupils, to be certain that it is thoroughly assimilated so that sound religious insights are thereby established – these should be the main objectives of religious education' (West Riding, 1966, p. 1). What follows in terms of syllabus content is, therefore, recommendatory only and based around general themes which linked—if the teacher was so minded—Biblical material with personal development.

Another syllabus, which appeared some three years later, that of the Wiltshire County Council (Wiltshire, 1967), attempted to push the same process, and teacher autonomy, even further in that it produced alternate syllabuses, A and B; the first intended to promote what was described as 'an entirely new form of religious education'; the second being, in the words of the *Times Educational Supplement*

Review (12th January 1968), 'for those teachers who want to lessen the leap'. To emphasise this new philosophy the syllabus appeared in loose-leaf form with the header of every page bearing the words, 'Prune and select material as required.' Others were to follow suit: this was the period of child-centredness, seen by many at the time as something of an end point in the long struggle away from the authoritarianism which had characterised education for generations. A full-page review of this syllabus, however, appeared in the *Times Educational Supplement* of 12th January 1968 under the title, 'Christianity in a Pagan Age'! However, the then Principal of Westhill College, Birmingham, founded in the early years of the twentieth century on John Dewey's principles of child-centredness, and itself a national centre for religious education, had stated a decade earlier:

All education begins with the child...to understand the child is the prerequisite of successful teaching. This is so familiar with us today that we find it hard to comprehend how little it was appreciated half a century ago. It is a truth which, having been once made clear, is for ever inescapable, and one cannot conceive of any form of education, religious or otherwise, in the future, (Newman, 1957) which will not be firmly based on child study.

His own city of Birmingham, however, had a surprise waiting in store for him!

All God's Children

Birmingham has often been described as England's second city. Be that as it may, it is a place of great significance in Britain's national life and the centre of the country's Midlands industrial base. Essentially conservative, it has had a tendency to hang on to its traditions longer than most and then suddenly to change dramatically. Twice in the twentieth century it has torn down its own city centre and totally re-designed and rebuilt it rather than make continuous adaptations. One can see the same tendency even in the matter of agreed syllabuses of religious education. Birmingham missed out altogether on the second stage of child-centred development, clinging to its 1950, Bible based version until the mid 1970s. Suddenly there appeared a document in 1975 which startled not only the secluded world of religious education but which hit the national and international headlines, caused questions and debates to take place in Parliament and became the subject of a BBC television documentary.

Birmingham had long been a centre for migration. From the early nineteenth century it had received a large proportion of Irish, Roman Catholic labourers who created much of the national canal system, which centred on the city and, later the infrastructure for the railways. As a city, too, it was unusual in that it had grown inwards from a number of long-standing smaller communities, rather than outwards from a geographical feature such as a river crossing. In short, it had long been a city of mixed communities with a high proportion of religious Nonconformists. Known for its heavy industry and with its constant demand for what was known

locally as, 'metal-bashing' or unskilled labour, it had, during the 1950s and 1960s, become something of a magnet for growing numbers of migrants from the old British Empire, first from the Caribbean and then increasingly from the Indian and Pakistani sub-continent. With them, of course, they had brought their religions. The new Agreed Syllabus reflected this while, at the same time, heralding a totally new form of syllabus presentation.

The official document was just 24 pages in length, but these included a *Foreword*, an Introduction, lists of the Membership of the Conference and eight pages of replicated Sections from the Education Act of 1944. The new Syllabus took up just four pages of headings, covering suggested content for pupils from three to sixteen years of age and covering five different religions, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, with a sixth, Buddhism, for older, post 16 year old students. The compilers, of course, were well aware of the central problem, namely that few, if any, teachers in the Authority were equipped to teach all of the new subject matter. Nor had they been trained to deal with the highly sensitive matters of racial and religious diversity, which, unlike most of their colleagues, R.E. teachers were now being expected to deal with head-on in the classroom.

The immediate answer lay in the very substantial 'Handbook' which accompanied the syllabus, but was not itself, a legal document. Its essential task was an interim one. It provided basic material from which teachers could draw until they could be retrained themselves through in-service programmes or, looking further ahead, until such time as a new generation of differently trained teachers appeared on the scene. In the meantime the suddenness of this change thrust the subject of religious education into the national headlines in a very dramatic way. Questions were immediately asked in Parliament and, in particular, the House of Lords in which representative bishops of the Established Church of England sat as of ancient right although, it must be said, it was not so much the bishops as certain other lay members of the Church who provided the sometimes vitriolic opposition to what they saw as a surrender of national culture to other alien ways of life. Church leaders, in fact, were, on the whole, well aware of changes in thinking about religious education which had been taking place over at least the previous decade. The Bishop of Durham, Ian Ramsey, had himself chaired a major report on the subject just five years earlier in 1970. This had borne the title of *The Fourth R* in reference to a long-held traditional, and totally ironical, reference to the basis of Education as the 'Three Rs' of Reading, '(W)riting' and '(A)rithmetic, (Ramsey, I., *The Fourth R*, 1970). Nevertheless, while the questions and problems raised in Ramsey's Report were to be highly significant in terms of curriculum development, they dealt mainly with the changing status of the subject and the role of the Christian Church, particularly the Church of England, within it: it had hardly anything to say on the subject of other world religions. Perhaps its longest lasting contribution has been a small six-page article, appearing as Appendix B, by the Oxford philosopher Basil Mitchell on the vexed subject of Education and Indoctrination (Mitchell, 1970). At the time, however, the main concern was the balance of power within the Standing Conferences which produced local syllabuses. As Adrian Bell has noted,

'This was the first authoritative renunciation of confessionalist aspirations for the subject in state schools. The report argued that the cultural, theological and educational changes since 1944 constituted a 'minor revolution' for R.E. within the curriculum, but one that was based upon what the report called 'educational criteria' rather than on any position of unique privilege' (Bell, 1985, p. 190).

A little later, on the same page, Bell quotes Ramsey's Report as also describing the then legal machinery as, 'a relic of the ecclesiastical era in religious education.' This undoubtedly referred to the dominant place of the Established Church of England of which Ramsey, himself, as the Bishop of Durham, possessed a status immediately under that of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

Although the primary legislation had not changed, the City of Birmingham Education Authority had obviously taken note of this self-criticism in drawing up the conference which was to decide its 1975 syllabus (City of Birmingham, 1975). It must be remembered, of course, that all four committees had to agree, regardless of each one's size, but the balance of members and the range which they covered varied from that of any previous conference elsewhere. Committee One, designated as 'Religious Denominations other than the Church of England' was composed of nine Free Church (reformed) representatives, plus, one Roman Catholic and one member from each of the Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu communities, a total of fourteen. This stretched the hitherto acknowledged meaning of 'denomination' but was accepted, thus giving a very necessary flexibility to legislative wording, which had been created in a very different social context. By contrast, the second committee representing the Church of England had just six members, only two of whom, both women, were lay members. The Teachers' Committee consisted of no less than sixteen members, while the Local Education Authority itself was represented by just four members, one of whom was Chair of the whole conference. It was this conference which brought about the total revolution of subject matter into what had hitherto been seen as a narrow and rather outdated school subject. The nation sat up and took notice: the BBC devoted a whole edition of its prestigious *Panorama* series to it, the national as well as the local press gave it major coverage and both the House of Commons and the House of Lords held debates on it while, ultimately powerless to stop it, or even to make changes to it without introducing primary legislation, because it was enshrined in law as a local authority decision.

Cinderella Comes to the Ball

With the advent of the 1975 Birmingham Syllabus a totally new orthodoxy came into being, although its birth pangs often seemed long and painful. Since that time no syllabus of religious education in England and Wales has been mono-cultural, based entirely on the Judeo-Christian tradition. Some voices on the political right continued to express opposition right up to and beyond the new Education

Reform Act of 1988 which instituted, for the first time ever, the idea of a national curriculum, something to which previously all governments, especially Conservative ones, had been dismissively opposed. Religious Education now found itself in a very unfamiliar position. For over forty years its syllabuses alone had not been decided by teachers in their schools but by committees, which also included local politicians and members of other professions. Now the situation was totally transformed. Religious Education became the only subject whose teachers played a more and more prominent part in syllabus construction as the status of churches and local politicians declined, while colleagues in all other subjects received their syllabuses from central government in the form of the National Curriculum Council.

As regards its subject matter the Birmingham syllabus swept the country but its style remained very conservative. For example, it still presented itself as a syllabus of religious *instruction* (R.I.) even though others before it had long since moved through religious *knowledge* (R.K.) to religious *education* (R.E.) and its general style of presentation followed suit. Such was the publicity given to its world religions content that another original contribution went largely unnoticed, namely that the membership also included at least one very prominent member of the National Secular Society among its working party, and as a member of its twelve person co-ordinating working party. This may have had little effect on its content but it is hard to see how it could not affect its style, which was rigorously conceptual, described in the 'Approach to this Syllabus' as 'informing pupils in a descriptive, critical and experiential manner' (p. 4).

In this respect a subtle but highly significant difference of emphasis characterised the new Hampshire syllabus some three years later, which was quite emphatically educational rather than instructional, placing the subject as much within the sphere of the creative arts as in the social sciences. Significantly, for those who tend not to see progress in terms of straight line progression, it was able to lift a quotation in support of this, not only from one of the very earliest 'Bible-based' syllabuses but from the pen of the second most senior figure of the established Church of England. Archbishop Cyril Garbett's *Introduction* to the York syllabus of 1948 had included the words:

'Valuable as the syllabus will be as an aid, far more important will be the manner and spirit in which teachers use it. A syllabus should never fetter them. Especially in religious teaching is freedom essential if teachers are to give their best – freedom of conscience, freedom of religious practice and freedom of religious thought do not go with a slavish adherence to a syllabus, even an agreed one' (see also Priestley, 1978, p. 36).

This conflict of styles goes right through the whole religious education debate. It can be most clearly seen in England and Wales during the period from the mid 1960s to the mid 1980s and its effects are still very much with us. Although a detailed analysis is not possible here it is not difficult to pin-point certain key influences. It was in 1962 that John Robinson, the suffragen Bishop of Woolwich,

published his book *Honest to God* (Robinson, 1962) in which he proclaimed that, 'our image of God must go'. No theological publication has created as much newspaper and media coverage since. Almost simultaneously, Ronald Goldman, a lecturer in Educational Psychology in Birmingham at the time, published his two books, *Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence* (Goldman 1964) and *Readiness for Religion* (Goldman, 1965) in which he declared that children could not adequately deal with abstract religious concepts before a mental age of 13+. The crucial distinction between these two stimuli has never been properly recognised but is absolutely central to thinking about religious education. It accounts for the divergences in thinking about syllabuses in this period and beyond. Robinson was talking about images; Goldman about concepts. The great fallacy throughout religious history has been to confuse the two, treating images as if they were concepts and then seeking to subject them to conceptual analysis.

'Tidying Things Up' or 'From Agreement to Imposition'?

In 1954, when the Institute of Christian Education published its report, 'Religious Education in Schools' it had listed the syllabuses used by 144 Local Authorities. Forty-nine of these were original; the remaining ninety-four had chosen to adopt from one or more of the others. Apart from the Isle of Anglesey, all the Welsh counties, even at that stage, had decided to create one Welsh syllabus. Since that time the number of Local Authorities has declined, as has the proportion of authorities which produce their own syllabuses. The result is that there are fewer original syllabuses now than at any time since 1944 while, those which do exist, follow more or less similar lines. What differs now is not so much content but proportionality (in terms of the time spent on any one religion).

The Education Reform Act of 1988 totally changed the face of English education. For the first time there came into being a National Curriculum, decided upon and determined, subject by subject, by government agencies and covering all age ranges. Religious Education was the one exception. But nevertheless, it was only a matter of time before pressure for some sort of conformity from the centre began to make itself felt. Government did not impose syllabuses, as it had done for all other subjects, but it began to create 'models' which Local Education Authorities were obliged to follow in interpreting the clause in the Act, which stated that syllabuses should:

'reflect the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (Education Act, 1988).

The number of models for interpreting this has subsequently been reduced to two!

Conclusion and Evaluation

There can be little doubt that the days of local agreed syllabuses of Religious Education are now numbered. In the *Editorial* of the British Journal of Religious Education for September 2004 Robert Jackson (Jackson, 2005) gave a balanced account of the pros and cons of the argument for a national framework, rather than for local syllabuses. He rightly argued that syllabus creation could be lengthy and complicated, that changes of jobs for teachers involved changes of ground to be covered and argued that time spent on revising syllabuses could be better taken up in improving the quality of teaching. He also acknowledged, as many others failed to do, that, to use my own words for brevity's sake, the current mantra of 'teaching and learning' often failed to cover the broader educational activities of 'interpretation, reflection and critical analysis'.

There is, however, a larger question related to Jackson's concern for teachers who change jobs and locations. Why should this now be a bigger problem than before, when for decades it was the norm? The answer to that lies in the fact that a whole generation of new teachers has arisen which has never had to concern itself with creating syllabuses at all. In 1944 the idea of an Agreed Syllabus was anathema to many besides Winston Churchill, because it took away from individual schools and teachers the freedom to be creative in syllabus construction. R.E. teachers were sympathised with by their colleagues because they were not free agents, while some of the second generation of Agreed Syllabus committees, as we have seen, went out of their way to emphasise that teachers still had freedom to adapt, change and introduce new material. The introduction of a *National Curriculum* has changed the whole culture of teaching as a profession. Teacher education, which once encouraged imagination and creativity in both content and method, has been transformed into a concentration on skills. Teachers no longer were expected to create so much as to 'deliver', although the dangers that, 'too often RE was reduced to the acquisition of facts about religions', were already being noted by an inspectors' report in the late 1990s (Ofsted, 1997, p. 7).

There are, moreover, much bigger dangers for the future. How, for example, is innovation to take place? And will it happen, like other subject syllabuses only at national level? Would the West Riding innovation of 1966 have happened as the result of a Government QUANGO (quasi autonomous national government organisation)? Certainly the Birmingham initiative of 1975 would not, judging by parliamentary reaction at the time. Both initiatives became widely accepted but the situation in Birmingham could have become critical had it had to wait for another decade or two until the more rural areas had started to feel that multiculturalism was their problem too.

This is the core of a major criticism put forward by Terence Copley, among others. In a presentation first given at a European conference (Copley, 2004, pp. 80–89) he asked whether or not Religious Education in his own country was failing to address its own culture. Did a national approach merely have as its norm the situation of the major cities? 'What about Glastonbury?' he has insistently asked (Copley, 2005,

pp. 94–96, p. 138). Glastonbury, is a town some 30 miles south of Bristol. It is small with a fixed population of around 10,000 but it not only has a religious and spiritual history as rich and as old as anywhere in England; it has also become a venue of young people's gatherings of all sorts and, Copley points out, the town centre has changed in response to it:

'Alongside institutional Christianity there is a splash of New Age and alternative spirituality shops and practices all along Glastonbury High Street. One can buy divining rods, crystals, cannabis, or go for counselling, group therapy or a Tarot reading. There are crystal gazers, astrologers, Shiatsu masseuses, vegan experts, regression therapists, devotees of the Goddess, Barachuh colour healers, Life Path leaders, Reiki practitioners, Feng Shui experts, Egyptian dance teachers, Wicca devotees and a host of others' (Copley, 2005, p. 87).

Is there here something of things to come? David Tacey on the other side of the world in Melbourne, Australia, certainly thinks so from his vantage point of teaching in a country that now plays host to all the religions of the Pacific Rim, (Tacey, 2000). Why is it being assumed that today's young people living within a multi-religious society will stay within the confines of their own traditions instead of seeking the spiritual dimension of life across the dividing lines? Somerset, the county within which Glastonbury stands, is well aware of the phenomena and perhaps in the past any new syllabus emerging from it could have incorporated it and quickly affected the national scene. Tacey's experience suggests this is more than just a local phenomenon; but one suspects that any London-based committee of experts is unlikely to experiment with it until what is seen as 'the major players' become interested. Governments the world over like tidiness and order: religion is messy. But it is also natural. There are those who would wish to run the world as a neat, formal garden and there are those who rejoice in nature and its diversity. Perhaps the opening lines of Alexander Pope's (1688–1744) poem, *Windsor Forest* best serve to summarise our story:

'Not chaos like, together crushed and bruised
But as the world, harmoniously confused,
Where order in variety we see
And where, though all things differ, all agree.'

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EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF A STATE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SYLLABUS FOR THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHER AND THE SCHOOL CHAPLAIN

Paul King and James Norman

Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University

The Evolving Context

General Education Context

The pattern and shape of education in Ireland has witnessed profound change over the past forty years and more acutely in the last ten years. This period was marked by a process of consultation among all the education partners culminating in the enactment by parliament of The Education Act (1998). This Act governs the legal obligation of the State in the provision of education to all levels from the primary to the tertiary sector. As a State sponsored development within education the Act was an acknowledgement of the major alterations in Irish society and the urgent requirement to engage in a proactive response.

At second level the majority of schools in Ireland fall under three sectors of school management. The largest of these sectors, the voluntary sector schools, are under the management of religious bodies, both Catholic and Protestant. The majority of funding for these schools is predominantly provided by the State and the shortfall raised by private means. The second sector, Vocational Education Committee (VEC) schools are entirely State funded and operate on a multi-denominational basis. Management comprises of a shared partnership between members of the VEC, locally elected political representatives, religious trustees, representatives of parents and teachers. The CEO as the overall director on a county basis administers these schools with larger cities having their own committee. Each school within this system receives devolved funding from the VEC, which in turn receives its funding from the State. Thirdly, the Community School sector has evolved from the closure or amalgamation of voluntary run schools or where new schools are

established in growing urban areas. The management of the school is directly under the patronage of religious trustees from the former religious run schools with VEC, parent and teacher representatives. The principal has a liaison role between the school and management body. Full funding is provided by the State directly to the school.

Changing Religious Context

In parallel with changes in education a monumental shift in attitudes and the practice of religion in Ireland has occurred in the last forty years. Understanding the reasons behind the displacement of religion as a formative influence requires an assessment of the interaction between faith and culture. In common usage the term 'religion' is often used interchangeably when referring to faith, spirituality or morality. It is more accurate to speak of a change rather than a loss in the religious attitudes of young people today. Generalisations about young peoples apathy towards religion are more accurate when specifying the level of Church attendance or practice and attitudes towards the Church as an institution authority (Fulton et al., pp. 50–69). Nevertheless, Brennan's (2001) analysis of religious change in Ireland summarises the inextricable link with the revolution of culture:

It seems to be an inescapable conclusion that the single most powerful influence on the beliefs, values, and attitudes of Irish Catholics, especially by the young generation, is the rapid change in the lived culture on the island as a whole (Brennan, p. 93).

Understanding the place of both religion and culture within Irish society is not possible in isolation from each other. Amidst the transformation of Irish culture it is not without irony that the place of religion within education should receive renewed attention. The symbiotic relationship between the Church and State has historically helped safeguard the place of religion in Irish schools, but the nature of this provision has largely resulted in catechesis rather than religious education.

New Developments in Religious Education

Students in Irish second level schools complete their education over five to six years. At the end of the first three years they sit the Junior Certificate examination (JC) taking an average of 10 subjects. Subsequently, most students continue their education and proceed to complete the final examination in second level – the Leaving Certificate Examination (LC). This examination is of much more significance as it determines entry to the third level sector, selection for an apprenticeship in a trade, or acceptance for training in a career. Until 2003 Religious Education (RE) was not part of the State curriculum examined at either JC or LC level. Prior to this schools had relative autonomy in the provision of a Religious Education syllabus and the content differed from school to school. The voluntary sector – Catholic

and Protestant schools - offered a programme based on their respective denominations. Although the other two sectors, the VEC and Community sector are State funded, religious education was also offered here and the syllabus was largely similar since the majority of teachers and pupils tended to be Christian and in most cases Catholic. Each Catholic diocese had a Director of Religious Education (DRE) who visited all schools, regardless of which sector, and provided direction and support in the provision of religious education to teachers. The nature of religious education provided within most schools lacked an overall uniformity. Some schools were orientated towards a catechetical approach. Others offered a more systematic 'knowledge' approach while others adopted a more humanistic style of content. Despite the difference in content between schools the majority of teachers in schools utilised some class time to provide students with some level of religious experience e.g. para-liturgies, retreats and prayer.

In 2000 the introduction of the new Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus (JCRES) redirected the emphasis on religious education. If catechesis was formerly perceived as a form of proselytising at the State's expense and at odds with the philosophy of a critical education, then this new curriculum raised fears that religious education might be reduced to the level of knowledge and compromise the commitment to the fostering of spiritual values. In the absence of a full time chaplain this apprehension was especially applicable to schools in the voluntary sector and to most of the schools in the VEC sector. Schools in the Community State sector have provision for a full time school chaplain salaried by the State. In the field of education this places the Republic of Ireland in a unique position within the Western democratic world as the only country where the government funds a paid school chaplain. However, schools in the voluntary sector, and a majority in the VEC sector, are not entitled to a paid chaplain. This is accurately perceived as an injustice for schools in these sectors. Some voluntary schools circumvent this by employing a chaplain paid from private funds. Without the presence of a chaplain many teachers, while supporting the introduction of the new religious education syllabus, feared the subjugation of a broad religious programme in deference to a knowledge based syllabus.

The Role of the School Chaplain

Before evaluating the possible implications of the new JCRES syllabus for the chaplain it is necessary to first consider the fuller contribution of chaplains to the wider curriculum and to school life generally. Chaplaincy has evolved in schools in Ireland over many centuries from a purely sacramental role provided by the clergy to a more pastoral ministry today where the professionally qualified chaplain as a person of faith, on behalf of the school and church communities, accompanies young people on their journey through life (Monahan & Renehan, 1998, p.10). Furthermore, the role of the school chaplain is crucial in terms of the school's ability to achieve a Christian ethos. International research in the USA (Bryk, Lee & Holland, 1993, pp. 140-141), the UK (Grace, 2002) and Israel

(Katz, 1994, pp. 39–41) has highlighted the importance of the full-time chaplain who, by caring for peoples' personal needs, was found to animate the Christian values on which many schools are founded. Consequently, it is also important that school managers and teachers understand that school chaplaincy is not ancillary to the educational aims of the school. In addressing the pupils' personal difficulties the chaplain is in fact helping the pupil to be more ready to learn and in doing so promotes the cognitive aims of education. Research in Ireland has shown that full-time chaplains in Community Schools also make a very significant contribution to the holistic development of pupils in schools. This is achieved through counselling, liturgies, supporting other staff, bereavement support, intervening in discipline problems, meeting with parents and visiting pupils and other staff in hospital (Norman, 2002, p. 9).

Can We have Religious Education and Faith?

The place of the new R.E. syllabus in the curriculum is educationally justifiable in that it seeks to make a contribution to the realisation and provisions of the holistic aims of education as outlined in the *White Paper on Education* (1995) which preceded the current legal framework for education in Ireland (DES, p. 10). Prior to the introduction of the syllabus arguments were advanced for the preservation of the status quo. The convergent view is that the academic, critical approach to religious education as underpinned in the syllabus and the catechetical dimension as expressed in the formative intention to educate young people in the way of being spiritual, are not diametrically opposed. The challenge is to formulate a creative and imaginative response to facilitate a synergy between both.

Although the parameters of the dual purpose of religious education extend to the whole school the syllabus holds particular significance for the teacher and chaplain as key agents in the provision of religious education for pupils. It raises issues with respect to the implications for the role of the chaplain and the role of the teacher of R.E. especially as defined in the context of the syllabus. Can the chaplain and R.E. teacher formulate a vision of religious education that is respectful of both dimensions and how are they to engage collaboratively to ensure the retention of balance between both? It may be that the introduction of the new Junior Certificate Religious Education syllabus will help create the challenge and context for a new vision of religious education that is characterised by a unity of purpose.

The reality of R.E. as an examination subject has shifted the context of debate to a new forum. For the R.E. teacher there is the issue of role – to teach as a catechist, evangelist, or religious educator with the primary responsibility to remain faithful to the aims and objectives of the syllabus. The teacher, who in the past embraced all or some of these roles, faces a new dilemma – is it possible to co-exist as a catechist and as a teacher of Religious Education within the remit of the syllabus? For the chaplain the issue of role is also pertinent and unique, as he or she may have to contend with the dual mandate of teacher and chaplain. Currently, most chaplains in the Community Schools and Colleges sector have a minimum obligation to teach

religious education for four hours per week.¹ Formerly, this obligation was more fluid as the chaplain may have used class time as an extension of chaplaincy. The latitude for the chaplain's discretionary use of class time may become minimal if he or she is also required to teach the syllabus. Under these conditions many chaplains express a concern over a conflict in the understanding of their own role and how pupils perceive it. Since many chaplains are qualified religion teachers an even greater fear exists that the management of schools may request chaplains to engage in more teaching than required at present. Both the chaplain and the R.E. teacher share a mutual fear that the introduction of R.E. as an examination subject will result in the diminution of faith formation of pupils.

The Role of the Chaplain and the Teaching of Religious Education

While the academic study of religion as proposed in the new syllabus marks a departure from the traditional approach to R.E. in Irish schools the catechetical dimension of faith must find a new forum for expression. The chaplain, though not having sole responsibility, is fundamental in facilitating the religious development of pupils. The case to be made is that the role of the teacher and chaplain are not as distinct as it may first appear but rather they can be compatible and complementary. The introduction of the R.E. syllabus has focused writers on Religious Education in Ireland to take cognisance of the implications for teachers of R.E. What are the challenges and opportunities that the syllabus will pose for chaplains?

While the overall aims of the new *Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus* are essentially educational, the last aim seeks 'to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the student' (*JCRES*, p. 5). The R.E. teacher cannot be reasonably expected to entirely facilitate the spiritual development of pupils. The classroom is essentially an academic construct and conduit for awareness, exploration and understanding of religion as opposed to an experience of religious faith. The syllabus taught in the school setting makes a contribution to religious formation but cannot claim to be the entire medium for religious formation. The teacher may also lack the expertise and skill to facilitate appropriately the spiritual development of pupils particularly with respect to the celebration of ritual and the practice of worship. In addition, pastoral care issues such as bereavement, bullying or illness require a particular kind of skilled intervention.

The classroom does not generally facilitate this aspect of religious development. A practical illustration of this might be an occasion where pupils come together in act of prayer and worship to commemorate the memory of a deceased person – a pupil or a member of the pupil's family. To situate such a personal and pastoral issue explicitly in the context of the classroom is to place an unfair burden on the teacher. The experience of bereavement in school would generally elicit the

¹ See Appendix B, Guidelines for the Chaplain in a Community School.

support of the teacher in assisting the chaplain. However, the nature of much of the chaplain's work is confidential and personal and the chaplain may have to withdraw pupils from class for pastoral counselling. This usually happened during the R.E. class because of the obvious symmetry between R.E. and chaplaincy. Previously, since the examination focus was absent, it was also deemed to cause the minimum of disruption to the pupil's cognitive development and learning. The introduction of an examined syllabus places R.E. on the same academic par with other subjects and it may be reasonably presumed that teachers will want to maximise the use of class time in order to fulfil the objectives of a demanding syllabus. Will the chaplain's use of class time be considered an intrusion in the context where a demanding syllabus requires the optimum use of time? Two issues are central to this question. Firstly, a reading of the syllabus shows that it is possible for the chaplain to function on the level of religious development even in the academic forum. This tension needs to be carefully facilitated but the chaplain in working with the R.E. teacher can hold this creative tension. Secondly, there is a need for clarity in order to establish the right of the pupil to religious development and the responsibility of the school to provide this opportunity.

The increasing demands placed on schools, not just within the academic domain but also arising from a rapidly changing society and culture, requires them to have competent and professional people, like the chaplain, who can assist with policy and the practical implementation of pastoral care. The chaplain is a pivotal figure in contributing to the ethos of the school where parents have a right not just to the religious instruction but also to the religious formation of their children. Both the chaplain and the R.E. teacher need a shared understanding of their respective roles. The ultimate purpose of this clarification is not to protect the identities of the chaplain and teacher but to ensure that the pupil has legitimate access to a religious education that is both *formative* and *informative*.

The R.E. Syllabus—An Opportunity for a New Partnership

The purpose of attempting to clarify both the role of the R.E. teacher and chaplain is to ensure that both aspects of Religious Education—the *formative* and *informative*—are mutually respected. The introduction of the syllabus has redefined the term *Religious Education* as traditionally understood in the context of Irish education. The syllabus is justified on educational principles and changes the interplay that previously existed between the catechetical and the critical understanding of Religion. The Irish context for the enterprise of Religious Education, at least in Community Schools and Colleges, is unique since provision is now made for an approach that combines both the educational encounter with religion as an academic pursuit via the syllabus and explicit provision for the religious and spiritual development of the pupil via the chaplain. (It is important to note that the Chaplains role in a school does not only arise out of the aims of the RE syllabus, but more fundamentally from the provisions of the Education Act 1998(d) and as such the Chaplain has a pastoral role to the whole school community.) The principal

challenge arises in the need to reassess how the school can ensure that both aspects are held in harmony.

By way of synthesis it is useful to make reference to *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (RDECS) published in 1988 by the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome (see Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*). The document acknowledges 'a close connection, and at the same time a clear distinction, between religious instruction and Catechesis, or the handing on of the Gospel message' (RDECS, par. 68). Although explicitly aimed at Catholic schools the document offers valid educational insights, which shares fundamental common ground with underlying education philosophy of the R.E. syllabus. The expectations placed on the teacher to be both a catechist and a teacher of religious instruction are immense. However, the document is clear that Christian witness is the prerogative of the whole school (RDECS, par. 26, 51, 58). It is striking that no reference is made to the presence of a school chaplain. This can be explained by the assumption made in the document that both aspects of religious education are the responsibility of the teacher in the Catholic school. It also reflects the reality that up to the early 1990s, at least in Ireland, chaplains working in Community Schools and Colleges were priests. Finally, it is worth noting that the document illustrates a number of the qualities desirable of the R.E. teacher. These qualities could be validly transposed to the chaplain—'affection, tact, understanding, serenity of spirit, a balanced judgement, patience in listening to others and prudence in the way they respond, and finally, availability for personal meetings and conversations with students' (RDECS, par. 96).

Although the introduction of the syllabus has an educational orientation, the structure of school organisation, principally though not exclusively in the role of the chaplain, has an equally binding commitment to religious formation. By reflecting on the role of the teacher and the chaplain it is possible to envisage a reality where both aspects—education and formation are mutually inclusive. The Christian story and vision needs the context of a critically reflective forum provided by the syllabus. This helps to engage pupils in a mature and appropriated faith, free from indoctrination and fundamentalism. On the other hand, the school can offer a shaping context for pupils to engage in the process of lifelong evolution into faith benefiting from the wisdom, traditions, ritual and symbols that give meaning to the threshold experiences of human life and ultimately engage the soul. Tension arises not only when space and time is limited but also, more fundamentally, when a dichotomy emerges between the chaplain and teacher where they perceive no connection or harmony in their respective roles. Both partners need an understanding of their own specific roles.

The response to the articulated concerns will largely be premised upon how the chaplain, teacher, and the school understand their own roles and the purpose of Religious Education. While the syllabus meets the objectives pertaining to the academic study of religion there is an apparent lacuna in the realm of religious formation. The new focus for debate centres on the plausibility of the classroom as

a valid context for both aspects of Religious Education. Although this debate is not a new one, stretching back to the 1960s (Marthaler, 1978, pp. 77–91), it has now shifted from the theoretical to the practical sphere for religious education in Ireland. We have argued for the equal validity and complementarity of both perspectives and to attribute the place of each to different domains. Rossiter (1982), in exploring this tension between Catechesis and Religious Education, speaks of the ‘creative divorce’ necessary to enable both aspects to be more independent of each other (Rossiter, 1982, pp. 21–40). The classroom is the proper context for the intellectual understanding of faith and religion and therefore the primary responsibility of the teacher. The practice of faith via liturgy and worship and the expression of religious experience and meaning requires a different forum and is fundamentally premised on the free response of the participant to the awareness of God. This latter dimension fits more naturally into the role of the school chaplain. However, it is imperative to state that this perspective on the approach to the syllabus does not envisage a complete dichotomy on the role of the teacher and chaplain. There is obvious scope within the syllabus for both the chaplain and teacher to work in harmony while remaining faithful to their respective roles.

Previously, most formal religious formation happened in the R.E. class. Major religious celebrations—opening of the school year liturgy, carol services, graduation ceremonies—generally involved the whole school. Other opportunities for religious activity happened usually in the context of the R.E. classroom. Thus, in order to ensure the continuation of religious formation and spiritual development of pupils, the whole school requires a paradigm shift in attitude since it may be no longer possible or indeed desirable to facilitate Catechesis entirely within the classroom. The immediate challenge for the chaplain will be to see the syllabus as an extension of the faith formation and spiritual development of the pupil and to afford the opportunity to engage with their own personal experiences and the lived experience of the Christian tradition. Here the chaplain’s role, as the school’s primary pastoral carer, in contributing to the culture and ethos of the school is essential so as to ensure that it continues as a pivotal shaping influence in the provision of holistic education.

The traditional model of religious education in Ireland had a strong catechetical dimension where a confluence was expected between what one practiced and what one preached. Since the new syllabus is educationally grounded this expectation can no longer be considered normative. However, severe limitations are imposed on the aims and objectives of the syllabus if it is merely defined as the transmission of knowledge. The religious formation of pupils takes place not just inside the classroom but also within the whole school environment. Hence the values to which we hope pupils aspire, must be modelled by all within our schools but especially by those who have particular responsibility for religious and spiritual development. Pupils are sharp in their perception of the teacher or the chaplain who lacks congruence between their ‘preaching’ and action. Both the teacher and the chaplain have a special duty of care towards pupils, ultimately manifested, in the quality of relationships.

The Syllabus and the Chaplain as a Resource

Having acknowledged the complexities of the chaplain's dual role as a teacher and chaplain consideration can now be given to how the chaplain can be a specific resource to the teacher with respect to elements of the syllabus where flexibility exists for the exploration of faith and the spiritual development of pupils. It is vital to state once again that spiritual development is not a pseudonym for religious education although there are close connections. It is also tempting to classify the objectives of both as so distinct as to be 'uneasy bedfellows' (Smith, 2000, p. 52). This apparent insoluble dilemma calls for the possibility of creative connection between the teacher and the chaplain. It requires systematic planning and organisation to enhance the interdependence between the intellectual and catechetical dimension of religious education (*JCRES*, p. 3).

The teacher's essential concern is to honour the educational philosophy of the syllabus made explicit by the aims and objectives while the chaplain is committed to ensuring that pupils are facilitated in their search for meaning and an experience of God. Smith (2000) offers a useful framework to help understand the complexity and flexibility of how spirituality relates to teaching:

Procedures are individual actions in the classroom, *designs* are repeatable patterns in the way teaching takes place, and *approaches* are the background beliefs, orientations and commitments which give rise to one pattern rather than another (Smith, 2000, p. 57).

From this framework it is evident that at the level of 'approaches' the chaplain and teacher can co-exist with similar purpose. The differentiation occurs in terms of 'procedures', 'designs,' and assessment. In approaching the syllabus the chaplain and teacher could identify areas of common ground where working together enriches the pupil's spiritual experience and also yields educational benefits in teaching and learning. A stated overall aim of the syllabus 'to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the pupil' (*JCRES*, p. 5) illustrates the connection between the formal curriculum and the lived experiences of the pupil.

The R E Teacher and Chaplain—Rediscovering Identity

What is central to the creation of our vision, and at the heart of all relationships, is our identity, our self-perception. As a collaborative mission, chaplaincy is a shared ministry, which invites the school community to personal witness as well as to a lived celebration of faith. Central to the chaplain's vision is the conviction that a living and vibrant faith in Christ can only flourish where positive relationships with staff and pupils are fostered. At a time when the pressures and demands of the teaching profession continue to increase teachers need chaplains to support, encourage, advise, and even sometimes challenge. Chaplains equally value the reciprocal support and co-operation of the R.E. teacher in the enterprise

of promoting the spiritual development and the formative dimension of religious education of pupils.

In our introduction we alluded to the changing landscape of Irish education and the emergence of a divergence in attitude to the Church and spirituality. This transition at the macro level is mirrored in the microcosm of the school, which has also undergone immense change. For the R.E. teacher the introduction of the new examination syllabus calls forth issues of identity arising from the changing nature and provision of religious education. The review of the R.E. teacher's educational philosophy has arisen as a consequence of the aims and objectives of the syllabus. The chaplain, who has an intrinsic link with religious education in the broadest sense, will be equally challenged to reconsider and define the essential nature of chaplaincy.

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RELIGION AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN FRANCE

Dr. Kevin Williams

Mater Dei Institute, Dublin City University

Introduction

The notion of excluding religious belief from the curriculum has been a feature of French schooling for the past century. This has led to a very strict and principled assignment of religion to the private sphere within the civic culture of France. The State school in France is conceived as a rigorously neutral and secular (*laïc*) civic space in which any expression of religious commitment is prohibited including, most controversially, the wearing of Islamic headscarves. Accordingly even the teaching of history of religions or religious studies has been rejected as a Trojan horse designed to subvert the secular polity (see Debray, 2002, p. 22; Bost, 2002, p. 6). This is an expression of the Republican ideal in France deriving from the French Revolution and culminating in the Law of Separation between Church and State almost exactly one hundred years ago.

Concerns about this policy have been raised by secularists and believers who have expressed dismay at the religious illiteracy (*l'inculture religieuse* or *analphabétisme religieux*) of young people. After all, the Christian tradition is a significant feature of public culture of France and the acquisition of cultural understanding assumes some level of initiation into this tradition. An understanding of religion is necessary to an informed response to the considerable body of religiously inspired poetry, music and art in Western culture in general as well as in French culture in particular. Without this understanding we read, for example, of young people, on seeing a painting of the Madonna by Botticelli, asking 'Who is the bird in the painting?' (see Debray, 2002, p. 15/6; Truong, 2002, p. 76). Here we are not talking of absence of religious faith but of cultural ignorance. To be sure, not all French young people attend State schools (some twenty percent of schools are Catholic) and in practice a lack of religious knowledge can be as prevalent among pupils who attend confessional as among their counterparts in

secular ones (see Debray, 2002, p. 30) but faith-based schools at least in principle do accommodate encounters with religious belief.

To address the condition of religious illiteracy, the French Ministry of Education introduced formally into schools the teaching of what is referred to as *le fait religieux* (see Dahéron, 2004). The phrase can be translated minimally as religious facts or information about religion but more accurately as knowledge or understanding of religion as a human phenomenon and which can be referred to as 'knowledge of religion' or, depending on the context, as 'teaching about religion'. This is not a special subject in the form of religious studies or worldview studies such as is to be found in the curriculum in other jurisdictions but rather the specialised treatment of religious themes as they arise across the curriculum, particularly in literature, history and philosophy. Underlying this policy is a very firm commitment to what is conceived to be an academic, detached, neutral approach to the topic of religion. Concern with this enterprise features not only in academic and more popular literature in France but is raised very often in the pages of *Monde de L'Education* (see, for example, the issues of May and October 2005).

In this chapter I propose to argue that, from an educational perspective, this kind of detachment of schools from religious beliefs is neither possible nor defensible. In its aspiration to attain neutrality in schooling, French policy requires a pedagogically unsustainable detachment from religion as a feature of human experience. Firstly, I wish to show that, whether or not 'knowledge of religion' is made a curricular aim, religious worldviews cannot be readily put to one side in education or treated in a neutral, depersonalised way. Secondly, I wish to defend the notion of a dedicated course in the study of religions/worldviews.

Pedagogy and Personalisation

It has always been necessary in any education worthy of the name that young people encounter different views, however religion itself is treated within the curriculum. Liberal democratic and educational principles require that teachers deal honestly with secular and religious worldviews. As John Stuart Mill comments: 'if Christians would teach infidels to be just to Christianity, they should themselves be just to infidelity' (Mill, 1997, p. 81). *Mutantis mutandis*, if non-believers wish religious believers to be just to them, they must be just to religious belief. Of course the irony is that students of philosophy, which is an option at second level in France, must engage with the truth claims of religion. Indeed, it is due to the inevitability of engagement with religious truth-claims that the *laïc* or secularist system in France excludes any kind of study of religion from schools. The French approach is based on the view that, just as students cannot study philosophy without engaging in philosophical reasoning, they cannot study religion without thinking seriously about religious matters. But through the study of philosophy, students must address the truth-status of religious claims.

To be sure not all students take philosophy but they all have to study literature. Encountering different worldviews has always been a feature of studying literature.

It is true that the primary purpose of teaching literature is to equip us to enjoy what Harold Bloom describes as the 'difficult pleasure' of reading well (Bloom, 2001, p. 29). But literature can also prompt us to review critically beliefs and attitudes that we hold dear. Reading well, as Bloom reminds with reference to the advice of Samuel Johnson, challenges us 'not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, but to weigh and consider' what we read in respect of how to make sense of the world and even to acquire knowledge 'not just of self and others, but of the way things are' (ibid., pp. 21, 29). (The first quotation is taken by Bloom from Johnson and the second is Bloom's own.) To adapt the famous expression of Kant in the Introduction to *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* with regard to his reading of David Hume, literature can awaken us out of our 'dogmatic slumbers' (Kant, 1950). Brendan Kennelly expresses this potential of literature very well. 'Poems that work get to the root of your position, they insist on becoming central to your life and may even change it' (McSweeney, 1983, p. 140). Such poetry 'reads you' in the sense that it 'really forces you to look at yourself' operating like a 'time bomb in the guts of complacency' (Murphy, 1987, p. 54). Drawing on his study of the journals of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Denis Donoghue (Donoghue, 1998, p. 56) rightly argues that the purpose of reading literature is to cultivate an 'ability to imagine being different' and 'to project myself into the state of being of another person' (Donoghue, 1998 p. 56). The experience of reading should 'provoke me to imagine what it would mean to have a life different from my own' (ibid.). Commenting on the effect of reading and writing fiction on her own psyche, Amy Tan captures this feature of literature dramatically. Fiction, writes Tan, has the power 'to startle my mind, to churn my heart, to tingle my spine, to knock the blinders off my eyes and allow me to see beyond the pale' (Tan, 2004, p. 322).

Or consider further the account of the potential of literature to subvert our usual ways of understanding the world and to enable us 'to see beyond the pale' in Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*. Gathering a group of former students to read forbidden works of Western literature, Nafisi demonstrates how encounters with fictional worlds encouraged the students in their opposition to the theocratic totalitarianism of Iran in the 1990s. '(M)ost great works of the imagination, writes Nafisi, are 'meant to make you feel like a stranger in your own home' (Nafisi, 2004, p. 94). They prompt us to question what we take for granted, especially 'traditions and expectations' where they appear 'immutable' (ibid.). She invites her students to consider the way in which great literature unsettles them, makes them 'a little uneasy' and invites them 'to look around and consider the world, like Alice in Wonderland, through different eyes' (ibid.). What a novel offers, she writes, is:

...the sensual experience of another world. If you don't enter that world, hold your breath with the characters and become involved in their destiny, you won't be able to empathise, and empathy is at the heart of the novel. This is how you read a novel: you inhale the experience (ibid., p. 111).

This means that any school curriculum that includes the teaching of literature must *ipso facto* accommodate a serious engagement with different worldviews. Students must learn 'to inhale' different experiences and to go beyond 'control beliefs', that is, ideological predispositions that inhibit a properly generous reading of texts. (I am grateful to David I. Smith's for alerting me to the expression 'control beliefs' that he has used in his work on the reading theory of N. Wolstertorff.) To draw on an insight of Eva Hoffman's, literature is animated by a powerful democratising impulse, which means that every reader encounters a text on equal terms regardless of beliefs and background (Hoffman, 1998, p. 183). In mediating to young people of a work of literature, the teacher allows different worldviews speak to young people in a democratic space into which all are invited as participants (see Dahéron, 2004, p. 6).

To invoke once more the words of Harold Bloom and Samuel Johnson, literature can challenge us 'to weigh and consider' what we read in respect of how to make sense of the world and even to acquire knowledge of 'not just of self and others, but of the way things are' (Bloom, 2001, pp. 21, 29). This means that students have to be enabled to engage critically with their own beliefs and commitments in the process of encountering those expressed in literature. In this way, the study of some literary texts will involve the facilitation on the part of learners of an honest, personalised engagement with their own and other worldviews. The classroom cannot therefore be an arena purged of contamination from the 'breathing human passion' (line 28 of 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' by John Keats) generated by beliefs and commitments. In this way the teaching of literature subverts the aspiration to moral and ideological protectionism in education as it also serves to subvert certain conceptions of the neutral teacher.

Encounters with different worldviews also occur in the course of the study of history: for example, in learning about the Reformation, about the Age of Enlightenment, or about Church-State tensions in France. Conflict between Christian denominations and between Christianity and Islam and Judaism have fuelled much of the civil disorder and war throughout the history of Europe. The USA was forged out of a desire to escape persecution and to enjoy religious liberty. The study of both history and literature can extend and enlarge our capacities to understand the beliefs, motivations and behaviour of other people. Such encounters with other worldviews are educationally appropriate, indeed inevitable. This point is captured powerfully in the famous passage of John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*.

He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may be able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion (Mill, 1997, p. 79).

Unless people encounter contrary views 'in their most plausible and persuasive form' and have 'thrown themselves into the mental position of those who think differently from them, and considered what such persons may have to say...they do not in any proper sense of the word, know the doctrine which they themselves

profess' (ibid.). People in this situation end up either following authority or embracing the point of view to which they simply feel 'most inclination' (ibid.).

So, as we have just seen, even if 'knowledge of religion' were not introduced in this way, religion has to feature in the school curriculum. But I do not believe that the cross curricular treatment of religion as conducted in France is enough. This leads me to wish to defend the notion of a dedicated course in the study of religions/worldviews. We should also bear in mind too that in France, two regions, Alsace and Moselle, enjoy an historic right to have optional confessional Religious Education included in the school day as part of publicly-funded educational provision.

The Curricular Location of Religious Education

The range and complexity of the human response to the world will require a specialised and focused attention that it could not be expected to receive via the interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary study of religion advocated by Regis Debray (Debray, 2003). In the first place, religion is too embracing a human practice to be covered in this way and this approach is unlikely to accommodate the kind of imaginative dwelling with religious belief that is required to come to understand it properly. This is not to argue for a form of narrow denominational catechesis but rather for a generously conceived and imaginatively designed multi-confessional programme that allows for the exploration of all religious beliefs and of agnostic and atheistic worldviews. Otherwise it is difficult to see how to have confidence in the quality of understanding that will be acquired.

In the second place, the only exposure that many young people will get to religion as a good in human life is in school. There is a moment in the autobiography of Aminatta Forna where the absence of any religious education in a child's life is memorably communicated. Culturally a Muslim, Forna had been brought up in no religion at all. The incident occurs in Sierra Leone when she comes across her grandfather at prayer. She is confused about how to respond but the idea 'lodged' in her head that she too should be praying.

So I knelt behind him, copying all his movements with no earthly idea what it all meant. Halfway through I began to feel foolish and decided to extricate myself, but that posed a new difficulty: to sidle away midway through prayers might seem sinful; at the same time I worried my grandfather might think I was making fun of him. I couldn't make the decision, so I went on, standing, kneeling and bowing for what seemed like eternity (Forna, 2003, p. 52).

The grandfather concluded his prayers without acknowledging her presence but she got the impression that he understood 'better than I, the struggle that had played out in my young mind' (ibid., p. 53). This incident captures the disablement that absence of any education in religion education can engender.

Thirdly, without engaging with the character of religious claims to truth, young people may dismiss religion entirely or else uncritically adopt views that they have inherited or that they encounter outside of the school. In the United States, the exclusion of the study of religion from the public school system has been criticised as a dereliction of duty on the part of educational authorities on the grounds that it prevents the scrutiny of religious truth claims within the classroom. Young people therefore come to form their views without appropriate pedagogic guidance (Rosenblith & Priestman, 2004, pp. 365–380). In the USA it seems to me that the failure to accommodate the study of religion in school has led to the domination, if not indeed colonisation, of religious discourse in the public sphere by the voices of unreasoning, sanctimonious righteousness.

The non-confessional sector in Ireland is to be commended for ensuring that children enjoy the opportunity to engage in the study of religion under the guidance of their teachers. In a piece in *The Irish Times* on *Learn Together: An Ethical Education Curriculum for Educate Together Schools*, Paul Rowe, chief executive of the organisation, writes that the teacher acts as a ‘guide’ in encouraging pupils to ‘explore, evaluate and assess different viewpoints in an atmosphere of respect’ (Rowe, 2004, p. 14). In helping pupils to ‘evaluate and assess different viewpoints’, teachers cannot be neutral on religious matters because it will be part of every teacher’s remit to enable learners to respect the force of better arguments. Reference to evaluation and assessment assumes the existence of criteria of truth and plausibility with regard to the claims of different religions. To be sure, conclusive proof cannot be provided in respect of the claims of faith but there exist nonetheless degrees of reasonableness in the area. No teacher can be neutral about the force of better arguments in respect of claims to reasonableness.

In the light of the unavoidable nature of addressing the truth status of claims that underpin worldviews, what is to be said regarding the expressions by teachers of their own viewpoints in the classroom? Is it educationally or pedagogically appropriate for a teacher to refuse to answer direct questions about her or his own religious view? I am referring here to such fundamental questions as, for example, whether God exists, whether Jesus was divine, or whether there is an afterlife. Obviously it is impossible to conceive of anyone, let alone a teacher, being without an opinion concerning these and other great questions about life and its purposes. I do not think that answers to these questions have to be prohibited in the classroom because of fears of partisanship on the part of teachers. There is a parallel in the teaching of history. I am not persuaded that teachers of history, any more than teachers of literature, morality or religion, can be neutral but this does not mean that they have to be partisan. We do not have to choose between neutrality and partisanship. In France, the search for an unattainable neutrality has led to extravagant efforts to avoid any reference to personal beliefs. Teachers are warned to avoid what has been referred to as ‘the trap of proselytism or of militant atheism’ that may be the result of an inadvertent remark (Cédelle, 2004, p. 32). This fear could lead to a paralysing reticence on the part of teachers. The approach I propose is for teachers to be non-defensive, honest and prepared to entertain questions about their beliefs.

Once such issues arise I wish to argue that neutrality is not a desirable option for the teacher. Here we need to note a distinction between two attitudes. The first is that we cannot provide answers on certain questions, for example, whether God exists, or whether there is an afterlife. According to this argument, it is impossible in principle to reach any conclusion regarding such issues. This is not really neutrality; it is agnosticism. According to the second version of neutrality, these issues are highly contested and will always give rise to disagreement between people. The problem with this form of neutrality is that it implies that one worldview is as good as another. Choice of worldview may become perceived as a matter of opinion. Young people can therefore get the impression that there is no ultimate criterion of truth or even of relative compellability that can be invoked in choosing between different worldviews. This suggests to them that the beliefs of eccentric cults have the same status as the beliefs of the great world religions or of atheism. This is not neutrality; it is relativism gone wild.

In any case, the aspiration to neutrality on the grounds of the susceptibility of young people to indoctrination is highly questionable. The notion that young people in the twenty-first century can be induced to remain, in a metaphor of Jill Paton Walsh's, 'warmly wrapped with the cloak of faith' (Paton Walsh, 1995) is seriously implausible.

The Stubborn Habit of Unfettered Thought

Both religious believers and secularists do well never to underestimate the robust resistance of young people to the proselytising designs of adults. There is a memorable scene in Tessa de Loo's popular novel, *The Twins*, which captures this resistance very well. Lotte, one of the eponymous twins, is sent to a Calvinist school in Holland because she cannot be accommodated in the State school. Having had a non-religious upbringing at home, she is intrigued by what she is learning from her teacher of religion. By contrast, her peers have no interest whatever in the subject, having been 'brought up on religion like a daily dose of cod liver oil' (De Loo, 2001, p. 74). Lotte gets the highest marks in the class in religious education but her knowledge does not encourage her to make the transition to religious commitment. What the school principal invites her to accept as 'profound truth', Lotte thinks of as being of the same status as the story of Snow White and belief in Santa Claus (ibid., pp. 75/76). My intuition is that opponents of formative education in religion seriously exaggerate the susceptibility of young people to indoctrination in this area.

The findings of French researcher, Jean-Paul Willaime, following a review of confessional schooling in Germany, confirm a trend that will not surprise many close to the reality of school life. He found that confessionalism at the institutional level does not necessarily translate into strong confessionalism in practice during Religious Education lessons. Teachers have to take into account the mindsets of children that can vary greatly due to a lack of homogeneity in terms of religious backgrounds even among those whose parents have the same religion

(see Truong, 2002, p. 78). This leads Nicolas Truong to conclude that there is a growing convergence between the profile of religion in the secular schools of France and the confessional equivalents elsewhere. In the former an attempt is being made to communicate the religious dimension of culture through teaching 'knowledge about religion' and in the latter an attempt to situate religion in a broader cultural context (ibid.).

Having supervised hundreds of RE lessons, my conviction is that indoctrinatory designs are not only morally and educationally reprehensible but that their manipulative intent is detected and rejected by the alert questioning of young minds whose common sense and intellectual independence never cease to impress me. This perception has led me for a long time now to question the rights of parents either, on the one hand, to withhold their children from, or, on the other hand, to insist on their participation in, religion class. The primacy given to parents' rights does not do justice to the capacity of young people themselves to make these decisions for themselves, especially at senior cycle at second level. It is both futile and educationally reprehensible to attempt to subvert young people's capacity for what John Hewitt calls 'the stubborn habit of unfettered thought' (from his poem *The Dilemma* in Craig, ed. 1999, p. 300).

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

Dr. Dorothea Filus

Monash University, Australia

Introduction

An examination of the literature on religious education in Japan shows that there is no shortage of interesting proposals for courses in religion, but rather that there is a problem with their implementation. Therefore, the problem lies not solely in the domains of education and religion, but is also conditioned and controlled by political and legal stipulations.

The unfortunate association of Shinto with the pre-war Japanese State, and the wartime collusion of other Japanese religious institutions, led the post-war Allied Occupation to insist upon the separation of religion and State. Article 20 of the 1947 Constitution of Japan stipulates that: 'The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activities.' Also the Fundamental Law of Education of 1947, although it emphasises the importance of religion in society and promotes developing tolerant attitudes toward religions among students, at the same time it forbids teaching specific religion in public schools. Consequently, there has been no religious education per se in Japanese public schools in the post-war era. However, classes in 'morals' have been allowed in primary and middle schools since 1958 and classes in 'ethics' in high schools since 1960. But such moral/ethical education has not been regarded as sufficient, and growing social problems, (such as bullying and the violence perpetrated by juveniles), have been blamed on the lack of spiritual guidance and religious education. Problems in schools include bullying, violence, chronic truancy, and an abhorrence of schooling. The highest frequency of violent incidents occurs in middle schools (78% occur in junior high schools). Serious crime by juveniles under 14 is constantly rising and a total of 212 juveniles younger than 14 were held in police custody in 2003 for alleged murder, robbery and other serious crimes. According to the National Police Agency

this represents a 47.2% per cent rise over the previous year. Bullying occurs predominantly in middle schools (62%) as does chronic truancy (80%) (Foreign Press Centre, 2001, pp. 19–25).

The 1995 Aum Shinri-kyō incident had a major impact on the attitude of the Japanese to religion. Aum Shinri-kyō members organised and executed a Sarin nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway system, in which twelve people were killed and over 5,500 commuters injured. Aum followers also committed other atrocities, including murder of some 77 dissident followers and non-members involved in disputes with aum Shinri-kyō.

Because many of the Aum Shinri-kyō followers were highly educated graduates from the best universities in Japan, some critics argue that the incident exemplifies the failure of the Japanese educational system and illustrates the endemic spiritual crisis faced by the younger generation (Martin, 1996). In the face of intensive media coverage of growing violence, some politicians have called for the introduction of religious education in public schools and for the revitalisation of religion in social life. Unfortunately the models of religious education and of religious ideals offered are those of the pre-1945 era and do not seem to fit current needs. Other commentators are sceptical about the potential effectiveness of religious education and argue that religious education in public schools will not resolve social problems but will only increase State control since it is much easier to rule and control people who have unified beliefs and values. They argue that it is in the interest of politicians to promote religious education and to call for the revitalisation of religion.

The Current State of Moral and Religious Education in Japan

In theoretical debates, religious education in Japan is often divided into three categories: sectarian (or 'confessional') education (*shuha kyoiku*); education in the knowledge of religious facts and information about religious leaders (*chishiki kyoiku*); and education in religious ideals and sentiments (*joso kyoiku*). Due to the Constitutional separation of State and religion only education in religious knowledge is permitted in public schools. Private religious schools are however allowed to conduct all three types of religious education.

The third type, education in religious ideals and sentiments, is the most problematic and is the source of continuing debate as to whether or not its teaching is permitted in public schools. In the post-war period, religious sentiments and ideals came to be understood as being associated with a sense of awe for things that transcend humanity (for example, nature, the supernatural, or the divine) or with a spirit of respect for other human beings and for life. The current debate on religious education in public schools is concerned with the questions of whether or not religious sentiments and ideals can ever be independent from religious convictions. If they are inherently controlled by religious convictions, then, under the current Constitution, they are not permitted to be taught in public schools.

Although private religious schools are permitted to conduct all three types of religious education, they usually refrain from doing so. There is enormous pressure on such schools to prepare their students for entrance exams to institutes of higher education. Students and their parents choose a school based on its academic ranking with little or no interest in the religious teachings of the organisation that runs the school. Often there is an unwritten agreement between the parents and religious school administrators that sectarian (confessional) education will not be conducted. As religious education is not an examination subject, neither students nor parents have much interest in classes in religion. Inoue (2000, p. 55) argues that religious education in private religious schools, in spite of its possibilities, is irrelevant to students as it does not address issues of interest to them, such as the relationship between contemporary society and religion. It also avoids the discussion of controversial topics, for example, the conflict in values between the general public and the particular religion, or the view that general public has of that religion or other religions. Inoue describes the current state of religious education in Japan as follows:

[R]eligious education in schools today provides youngsters with almost no information whatsoever about contemporary religion. Of course, they usually cannot gain such information at home or in their local community either. That is because the average family will usually be loath to exchange opinions about religious problems. The question therefore becomes one of from where the young generation receives its information about religious topics. The most important source is the mass media, especially television. Because mass media outlets too often purvey religious information in a fragmentary and irresponsible fashion, however, in today's Japan young people have very few opportunities to acquire any systematic knowledge about religion (Inoue, 2000, p. 55).

As already discussed, political and legal restrictions obstruct the introduction of religious education in public schools. Unless the Constitution of Japan and the Fundamental Law of Education are amended to redefine the relationship between the State and religion, religious education, except for education in religious knowledge (*chishiki kyoiku*), will not be allowed in public schools. However, the Central Council for Education (*Chuo Kyoiku Shingikai*), which consists of representatives from academia, education, politics, business and sports, and acts as the advisory body to the Ministry of Education, has recommended that education in religious knowledge is not sufficient to contribute to the positive enhancement of moral values of young people. It argues there should be an ethical code taught to students. The Council advises that 'because religion holds significance in the lives of individuals, it is important children learn about this significance from an objective viewpoint' (Arita, 2003). Consequently, the 2003 report on educational reforms issued by the Ministry of Education states that religious education should incorporate education in religious sentiments (*joso kyoiku*). Religious sentiments are regarded by many Japanese as a key to understanding Japanese religiosity. Despite this, some scholars of religion still argue that this type of religious education, being inevitably related

to a particular religious tradition, should not be conducted in public schools. At this stage, the debate has little possibility of being resolved unless the Constitution is changed.

Some Aspects of the Proposed Revision of the Constitution of Japan

At the time of writing, (2005), the drafting a revised Constitution is a major preoccupation of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The LDP has appointed a panel charged with this task. The panel consists of ten subcommittees, headed by former prime ministers and other prominent members working on the revision of ten principal chapters of the current Constitution (Wakamiya, 2005).

Former Prime Minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone, has long advocated such a revision and has released his own draft titled 'Proposal Concerning Revision of the Constitution of Japan' (Nakasone, 2005). Among eighteen proposed changes, there are three that directly or indirectly relate to religion and religious education in Japan. One is Nakasone's wish to define, in Article 1 of the Constitution, the Emperor as Head of State. Under the current Constitution the Emperor is not the Head of State, but only a symbol, and has no executive power within the government. In reality, however, he functions as a ceremonial Head of State. Nakasone's vision is to bestow new political and legislative authority upon the Emperor. Should this happen it may result in increased influence for the Emperor's religion, the Shinto of the Imperial House, which, together with the cult of the Emperor, was the major component of the pre-1945 religious amalgam of State Shinto. (The Japanese term for the emperor is *tenno*, which literally means 'heavenly sovereign', and thus the term and its connotation implicate the unity of religion and politics). It can also be questioned as to whether the Emperor, (who has traditionally been considered as possessing magical powers enabling the propitiation of, or intercession with gods; who originally was a shaman, and who still remains the chief Shinto priest), should be given more power and authority in the 21st century.

Another recommendation that Nakasone wishes to emphasise in the preamble and Article 1 of the revised Constitution, is the uniqueness of the Japanese nation. The Meiji Constitution of 1889 and the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education (known for its glorification of the emperor, preaching of loyalty to the emperor, the country and one's superiors, and also for its contributions to the creation of wartime ultra-nationalism) also emphasised the uniqueness of the Japanese nation and the unique, allegedly unbroken imperial line. This uniqueness of the Japanese nation was also an important component of the Nihonjin-ron theory, otherwise known as 'the consensus model of Japanese society.' Nihonjin-ron theory provided the dominant stereotyped image of Japanese society in the 1970s and early 1980s as a unique, harmonious, integrated, uniform and consensus oriented group. The theory also included myths about the racial and cultural homogeneity of the Japanese, which further emphasise the uniqueness of the nation. The homogeneity theories have been debunked by many scholars (Mouer and Sugimoto, 1986; also Ishida, 1993). In the era of globalisation, it is difficult to understand why changes in the Constitution

would emphasise Japanese uniqueness, rather than focus on the universality and inclusiveness of society.

Nakasone also wants to 'clarify' the separation of State and religion by allowing State politicians to participate in certain religious activities, which he claims are social formalities or 'folkways'. An example of this type of activity is the Shinto ceremony for purifying a building site (*jichinsai*). Nakasone has not clarified his position on Shinto or how he wants it defined. It is unclear as to whether he regards it as a religion or perceives it from a pre-war position as merely an expression of Japanese social norms. The latter position previously allowed Shinto and the cult of the Emperor to be disseminated in schools and through all other State organs. How exactly Nakasone wants to distinguish between 'religious activities' and 'social formalities' is somewhat enigmatic. Unless the status of Shinto is clarified first, it is doubtful that the changes as proposed by Nakasone would clarify the relationship between state and religion. On the contrary, it will actually make it more ambiguous.

A Reinterpretation of Shinto for the 21st Century

Shinto has no founder and the religion is a product of community spiritual experiences, values and norms as well as of philosophical and intellectual traditions. Shinto is not static. In the Meiji period (1868–1912) Shinto was reinterpreted and moulded into a State ideology with the cult of the Emperor at its centre. For political reasons, Meiji leaders declared that Shinto was not a religion. In the sixty years that have passed since the end of the Second World War Shinto has not been re-evaluated. Today, most Japanese do not consider Shinto to be a religion and this actually reinforces pre-1945 propaganda. The debating of Shinto beliefs and of its standing in Japanese society remains taboo.

It can be argued that Shinto should officially be declared a religion. If this were to happen then Shinto beliefs, as well as the so-called folk beliefs and customs that clearly have religious origins, could be 'renegotiated' in order to conform to the culture of the 21st century. Other religions regularly undergo changes in both dogma and practise. Catholicism for example has changed dramatically in the period since the Second Vatican Council. Shinto probably should undergo a similar modernisation. Shinto beliefs and ideals do not currently reflect the values of the modern Japanese State and its people. In this context it is interesting to note that Noriyoshi Tamaru (2004) considers that State Shinto of Meiji period was actually a New Religion. Yokota (1993, p. 208) also considers State Shinto as a New Religion. If this is correct then it is perhaps necessary today to provide Shinto with a 'New Religion' for the purposes of guiding Japanese society into and through the first century of the third millennium.

In April 2004, the Fukuoka District Court judged that Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine for the war-dead during August 2001 was unconstitutional. Koizumi commented: 'I do not understand why my visit was unconstitutional' (Yoshida, 2004). He speaks for many Japanese people. Given that the Shinto religion, as a great solace for the bereaved family, can make a war dead

person a *kami* (god) and the State, or more precisely foreign States, make such a person a war criminal, it is difficult for Japanese people to comprehend the court's decision. There is a conflict here that needs to be resolved.

At the heart of these persistent problems, and the lengthy court cases relating to the separation of State and religion, lies the nature of Shinto beliefs. This particularly pertains to the beliefs as influenced by the propaganda of the pre-war State Shinto on the one hand, and the Japanese preoccupation with ancestor worship, (the predominant characteristic of Japanese religiosity), on the other. In Shinto there is no guiding set of commandments or code of ethics for believers. Gods are neither perfect, nor omnipotent, nor absolute. Some gods are worshipped in fear of their vengeance for not doing so (Smith, 1974, pp. 56–60). Ancestor worship may be related to such fears. The Japanese revere their ancestors to an extent that is difficult for foreigners to understand. Most Japanese people, irrespective of their religion, would agree that respect is owed to their ancestors. In Japan ancestors are often worshipped on daily basis, offered their favourite foods, talked to and reported to on family matters, (both happy events and misfortunes), and asked for advice when difficult decisions are to be made. Most importantly they are asked for protection and assistance in achieving prosperity.

This preoccupation with ancestors is also reflected in Japanese Buddhism, a major task of which is to perform funerals and memorial services for ancestors. In Japanese Buddhism every deceased person becomes a *hotoke* (Buddha). For Shinto, according to Brown (1968, pp.180-181), the worship of ancestral *kami*, and of the souls of the dead, appeared rather late in Japanese history. It did not become widespread among the common people but was promoted by political leaders for their own advantage. At present there is no agreement as to whether or not a deceased person may become a *kami* (god). Some consider that an ordinary person may never become a *kami* after death unless that person was a national hero and/or died on behalf of the country. This view seems to be greatly influenced by the propaganda of pre-1945 State Shinto. Others claim that ordinary people can become *kami* on the 33rd or the 50th anniversary of their death (Smith, 1983, pp. 51–55).

Smith explains the relationship between ancestor worship, filial piety and the loyalty to the emperor as follows:

The state has frequently intervened to shape and exploit the ancestral rites in Japan. From the Meiji Restoration in 1868 to the end of World War II in 1945, the government was at great pains to construct a link between ancestor worship and filial piety on the one hand, and imperial loyalty on the other. The concept was by no means entirely new, having its roots far back in Japanese history, but the rhetoric was. The theoreticians of this effort maintained that filial piety and the loyalty to the Emperor were one and the same. Thus, as the father was the head of the house, so the emperor was the head of the national family. All Japanese were thus claimed to be united by ties of kinship (Smith, 1983, p. 54).

However one has to be cautious about Nakasone's thoughts on the subject of ancestor worship, filial piety and imperial loyalty. In Shinto, charismatic persons of exceptional qualities, such as some religious leaders or national heroes, are often referred to as *kami* (god). The emperor is the chief Shinto priest and Nakasone's goal is to make him the Head of State. This would place the Emperor in a powerful position and could make him a possible candidate for an *arahitogami*, the god incarnate, the title held by the Meiji Emperor, the Taisho Emperor and the Showa Emperor.

The Relationship Between the State, Religion and Education in the Meiji Period and its Legacy

The new Meiji government, established in 1868, was faced with two major tasks: one was the legitimisation of its political rule, the other was the need for Westernisation and modernisation of Japan in order to make the country strong politically and militaristically. The new government was dominated by the lower-ranking samurai who needed to sanction their authority. In opposition to the previous Tokugawa warrior government (1600–1868), which made Buddhism its State religion, the new Meiji leaders used the status of the emperor and his religion, Shinto, to unite the country and achieve their political goals. Throughout Japanese history in times of political crisis, especially during drastic changes of the governing elites, the authority of the emperor was called upon to legitimise the new state of affairs (Tamaru, 2004, p. 9). In the Meiji period the status of the emperor, who represented both political and religious authority, was used for this purpose yet again. The next step in the process of restoring the rule of the emperor was the realisation of the ancient doctrine of the unity of religious ritual and government administration (*saisei itchi*). This doctrine reflected the religio-political reality of ancient Japan where the emperor was both the ruler and the highest priest.

The Meiji government wished to modernise Japan and achieve Western levels of science and technology but rejected Western ideology, in particular Christianity. This required the government to formulate a new ideology to suit the new state of affairs. This was done by trial and error. First the government, wishing to establish Shinto as a national religion, started to persecute other religions, such as Buddhist and Christianity. However because of foreign protests and diplomatic threats, the government declared freedom of faith and stopped persecution of Christians in 1873. This brought about more progressive and liberal change. The decade of 1875 to 1885 saw growing popular dissatisfaction and agitation epitomised in the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. This resulted in a shift towards conservative ideology. The government chose Confucian ideology, hoping that its emphasis on loyalty, obedience, duty and order would contribute to the inculcation of the Emperor's cult, and would help to destroy the Freedom and People's Rights Movement.

However, not all Meiji leaders were in favour of Confucianism. Yukichi Fukuzawa in his *Tokuiku Ikan* (What Way for Moral Education), published in 1882, called for a new morality for the new age. When Arinori Mori became the Minister

of Education in 1885, he reduced the amount of 'moral education' (*shushin*) and forbade Confucian indoctrination at school. Instead he aimed to create a Western-style education system in accord with the philosophy of education for the national polity. Although the earlier Education Order of 1872 emphasised the needs of individual, Mori postulated education for the sake of national prosperity not for individual goals. In spite of the fact that he was a Christian and a proponent of a progressive mode of thought, he understood the importance of the emperor for national unity. He shared this standpoint with Hirobumi Ito, who became the first Prime Minister of Japan in 1885. They both spent a fair amount of time overseas studying education and constitutional law respectively (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 1980; also Sato, 1983, p. 279).

Hirobumi Ito, who was the major author of the Imperial Constitution of Japan of 1889, argued that while in the West the Christian religion supported constitutional policies and united the people, Japan had no national religion and therefore the government needed to create an ideology to unify its people. The leaders of the Meiji Restoration of 1868 concluded that Shinto in itself lacked the unifying qualities, and that it was only the imperial institution which was capable of bringing the people together to follow government's policies (Nitta, 2000, p. 260).

Mori was assassinated in 1889, the year when the Constitution was promulgated, and one year prior to issuing the Imperial Rescript on Education. The Imperial Rescript on Education, promulgated in 1890, was the result of an ongoing debate on what is central to Japanese morality. One of the authors of the Rescript was Motoda Nagazane, a Confucian scholar and tutor to the Emperor Meiji. Nagazane postulated the revival of Confucian thought and morality. The Rescript starts with extolling Japan's historical and unique national polity based on an allegedly unique relationship between the benevolent emperors and loyal subjects. It then lists 14 virtues, predominantly Confucian virtues of which the most important were loyalty and filial piety, but also virtues considered crucial for citizens of the modern State which Japan strove to be. These virtues were respect the Constitution and work for the public good. The Rescript called for protecting one's country and the Emperor. Thus clearly the emperor and the country of Japan were inseparable. School children studied the text during their moral education classes and were expected to learn it by heart (Sato, 1983 p. 279; also Inoue, 1996, pp. 140–41). Even today many elderly Japanese can still recite the text by heart (personal observation).

In 1891 the Outline of the Course of Study for Elementary Schools was issued. As regards moral education, the document stated that: 'the aim of morals is the cultivation in children of a good conscience based on the fundamental principles of the Imperial Rescript on Education (quoted in Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 1980, Chapter III: 3(3), p. 1). Students were to be taught filial piety, benevolence, sincerity, courage, humility, and, in particular, reverence for the emperor and love of the country. In elementary schools the number of hours of moral education per week increased to three hours and in higher schools to two hours. Courses in moral education (*shushin*) aimed at instilling patriotism and loyalty to the emperor. During the Pacific War these courses were further infused

with nationalistic and militaristic tones. After Japan's defeat in 1945, the Occupation authorities suspended the teaching of *shushin*, banned the Imperial Rescript on Education, and conducted a thorough educational reform. The Fundamental Law of Education of 1947 replaced the Imperial Rescript on Education as the basic philosophy of education.

The foundation of the separation of religion and education was laid in the Education Order of 1879 when religious instruction was forbidden in schools. The separation was further confirmed in Directive No 12 issued by the Ministry of Education in 1899, which prohibited the teaching of religion and the conducting religious ceremonies in schools. Both orders were intended to stop the spread of Christian morality and the growing influence of Western values. At the same time the foundations of the emperor worship and State Shinto were being established. This was cleverly achieved by inculcating the idea that Shinto and its shrines were not religious, but simply epitomised the culture and customs of the Japanese nation. Emperor worship, based on Shinto ideals, was introduced into schools (Inoue, 1996, pp. 139–141).

Although the current state of affairs is rather different when compared to the pre-war Japan, one cannot help but notice certain developments in the spheres of politics, ideology and education, which remind one of those of the Meiji period.

The Persistence of Conservatism in Japan and the Revival of Nationalism

Recent years has seen a strong emphasis on developing patriotic sentiments among young Japanese. In 1999 the 'National Flag and National Anthem' law was enacted. The Education Ministry, in cooperation with the prefectural education boards, has strengthened its control of teachers and students by surveying schools and sending officials to schools during ceremonies to keep an eye on teachers' behaviour. Consequently many teachers have been reprimanded or even dismissed and their wages were reduced, for not singing the national anthem and for not saluting the flag (Hanai, 2004). Amnesty International Japan urged the Japanese government on June 9, 2004 not to impose the order to salute the flag and sing the anthem in schools, because it contradicts freedom of thought, consciousness and expression as guaranteed under Japan's Constitution (*Japan Today*, June 10th, 2004).

Many teachers refuse to sing the national anthem because its origins are the 10th century poem dedicated to the then emperor, and it was subsequently appropriated by the Emperor Meiji at the beginning of what was an era of nationalism and militarism in Japan. The teachers argue that the national anthem has a religious flavour and is linked to the nation's past militarism and colonialism. They further argue that forcing them to sing it infringes on their freedom of thought and conscience guaranteed in the Article 19 of the Constitution (Arita, 2005). When the anthem is fused with the national flag, a symbol of the sun and reference to the most prominent Shinto deity, Amaterasu, (the Sun Goddess and the progenitor of the imperial line), it is seen by many as providing sanction to a return to a pre-1945 ideology.

The government wants to revise the Fundamental Law of Education in order to add the concepts of patriotism, public morals, and respect for Japanese tradition and culture. The government entrusted the Central Council for Education, an advisory body to the Education Ministry, with the task of preparing a proposal on how to change the current Law of Education. Some critics argue that the drive toward amending the law has come from rightwing politicians in the Liberal Democratic Party and that no public debate is taking place. Some members of the Central Council for Education argue that care should be taken not to mistake patriotism for narrow-minded nationalism or aggressive totalitarianism. Although some critics argue that education is in crisis because of the current law, others claim that the crisis is caused by the fact that the principles of the current law have never been realised in the education system (Arita, 2002; 2003).

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) declared in January 2005 that it is a patriotic duty for party members to visit the Yasukuni Shrine to pay tribute to the war dead and that this will continue (*The Japan Times*, January 7th, 2005). Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine are perceived by Asian countries as a sign of unwillingness on the part of the Japanese to recognise and deal with their early 20th century aggressive militarism and colonialism. The protests are additionally fuelled by the approval in April 2005 by Japan's Education Ministry of controversial history and civic studies textbooks which are perceived to whitewash war history. In spite of numerous protests from the governments of China, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, which claim that: 'Koizumi's continued visits to the war-linked shrine show a lack of repentance for Japanese military atrocities during World War II and hurt the progress of Japan's ties with Asian countries' (*Japan Today*, May 18th, 2005). Koizumi keeps ignoring the protests arguing that other countries should not interfere with the ways the Japanese people pay tribute to their war-dead. It should be recalled that Prime Minister Koizumi's pledge to visit the notorious shrine helped him to gain the support of the influential Japan Association for the Bereaved Families of the War Dead, and consequently win the elections in 2001 (Yoshida, 2005b).

The LDP message is clear. It is the greatest honour to give one's life for the country and the Emperor and this guarantees the spiritual ascension to the status of kami (god). This message is inclusive of the convicted Class A war criminals, including wartime Prime Minister General Hideki Tojo, honoured at the Yasukuni Shrine. It is also noteworthy that the Yasukuni Shrine has strong ties with the Imperial family. The current chief priest Toshiaki Nambu, who has been in office since September 2004, had no experience in religious work prior to becoming the chief priest. He was a businessman, but most importantly he comes from a former peerage family, and thus is related to the Emperor (Yoshida, 2004b). Thus, his nomination clearly indicates the importance of politics at the Yasukuni Shrine, where the chief priest's connections with the Imperial family are more important than his religious training and skills. Some critics, including Takubo (2001), see these 'patriotic' developments as 'the first step in a larger movement toward normality', intended to heal Japanese political 'handicaps'

suffered since the end of World War II. However, patriotism as proposed by LDP and other conservatives is clearly inseparable from worship of the Emperor and pre-1945 State Shinto ideals. It is doubtful whether this type of patriotism proposed by the conservatives will have any meaning for younger and more progressive Japanese.

Nakasone, the principal architect of the move to revise the Constitution, was born in 1918 and educated during the period of Japan's colonial expansion and World War II. His current political ideology and outlook is directly attributable to the State generated indoctrination carried out in schools and other institutions during this period. As such, he belongs to a generation who are inward looking. His ideals do not reflect the values and beliefs of people born after the war. In Nakasone's vision for Japan, there is little innovation and much restoration. Any revision of the Constitution must serve future generations, not just satisfy the nostalgia and ideals of a dying generation.

Nakasone is not alone in his effort to revive the past. Other conservatives use every possible opportunity to return to pre-1945 slogans and ideals. For example, public concerns with juvenile delinquency, with the increase in crime rates and the general crisis within the education system are cleverly exploited by conservatives both inside and outside the LDP. In 2000, when a teenager kidnapped a bus and its passengers in the city of Fukuoka and subsequently killed a woman, the then Prime Minister, Yoshiro Mori, exploited the situation to promote the need for ethical guidance (*kokoro-no kyoiku*). In a widely criticised statement at the time, Mori said: 'Japan is a nation of gods with the Emperor at the centre' and concluded that Japanese children need ethical guidance (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2000). On May 4th, 2004 Yukio Hatoyama, former leader of the Democratic Party of Japan, attempted to exploit public sentiment and support for Princess Aiko by calling for the revision of the Constitution in order to grant the Emperor the status of Head of State and allow female members of the imperial family to ascend the throne (*Japan Today* May 6th, 2004). In promoting a popular public wish to see Princess Aiko as Empress of Japan, Hatoyama cleverly links a progressive move to the conservative demand to make the Emperor Head of State (cf. Yoshida, 2005).

It is questionable whether these conservative politicians will be able to revise the current Constitution and the 'Fundamental Law of Education' to the satisfaction of the public. The *Asahi Newspaper* (May 1st, 2005) released the results of a public opinion survey on the revision of the Constitution which indicated that for the first time since the *Asahi* started taking polls on the subject the majority of the Japanese (53%) favoured revising the Constitution. However, 60 per cent of the respondents did not want Article 9, (which renounces war), to be changed (Shimoyachi, 2004). This is in contrast to the 85% of Liberal Democratic Party members who favour revising Article 9, (*The Japan Times*, September 5th, 2004) a marked discrepancy in support between the public and conservative politicians. In March 2005 the Lower House Research Commission on the Constitution released a report which showed that 50 commission members made almost no progress and they agreed on only a few of the issues which it is proposed be revised. Most

members rejected the proposal to make the Emperor the Head of State, arguing for the continuation of his current status as the symbol of the State (Kajimoto, 2005; *Asahi Shimbun*, March 31st, 2005).

Possibilities for the Religious Education in Japan

There are proposals that are of interest and potential value to a renewed religious education program in Japanese public schools. In a number of publications and lectures Nobutaka Inoue has perhaps presented the most comprehensive proposal for religious education. Inoue argues for 'religious culture education' (*shukyo bunka kyoiku*), a type of religious education that is closely related to education in religious knowledge (*chishiki kyoiku*). 'Religious culture education' provides an in-depth study of various world religions, their basic teachings and customs. Its object is not to merely achieve a theoretical knowledge of religion and its cultural aspects, but rather an understanding and empathy that would promote unbiased opinion (Inoue, 2002, pp. 15–16). Originally, Inoue (2002, p. 15) rejected education in religious sentiments and ideals (*joso kyoiku*) as ambiguous. However, in his subsequent research report (Inoue, 2004, pp. 13–15) he suggests that 'religious culture education' may include education in some religious sentiments and ideals. This education should not be understood in its traditional sense where there is a sense of awe for something that transcends the human (nature, the supernatural, or the divine), or a sense of the sacredness of life. But he notes that in an era where State and religion are separate there is currently no place in public schools to experience the value and importance of life or to nourish the sense of awe of the divine. This experience can be gained in private religious schools or, more appropriately, should be taught at home, or in the course of religious teaching by different religious denominations. However, knowledge of various ways of religiosity and religious customs, such as abstinence from certain foods and activities, strict ethical codes of behaviour, austerity, or rigid religious observances should be taught in public schools. This can contribute to the appreciation of the religious beliefs and sentiments of others, and develop empathy and understanding of various religions and their followers. Inoue argues that this is an important task in the era of globalisation and condemns conservative politicians for being completely unaware of the needs of society in an increasingly globalised world (Inoue, 2004, p. 7).

In 2003, in a speech to the Union of New Religious Organisations of Japan (*Shinshuren*), Inoue expressed his frustration with the members of the Central Council for Education (*Chuo Kyoiku Shingikai*) for being ignorant about religion and for not being in position to advise the Ministry of Education on a new curriculum in religious education. Inoue also communicated his disappointment with teachers' knowledge of religion and their inability to teach different religious cultures (Inoue, 2004, p. 15). He further argued for the importance of establishing research centres, creating computer programmes, Internet networks and on-line training to ensure that teachers are trained in this area. Inoue (2003) also calls for leaders of New

Religions to produce videos and other educational materials to ensure that teachers have proper understanding of their religions.

Another proposal is that of Takekazu Ehara (2001, 2003). Ehara (2003, pp. 64–65) calls for the establishment of ‘values education’ (*kachi kyoiku*). By ‘values’ he means principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, norms and stances which function as general guidelines for behaviour, as criteria for judgement in decision-making or for evaluating beliefs and behaviours. Ehara argues that in order to encourage a spirit of tolerance in students, they should be taught to appreciate the diversity of moral and spiritual values. He proposed the incorporation of elements of civic education into ‘values education’ with the desired outcome that students would be aware of their rights and duties as citizens and develop a sense of social responsibility.

Another proposal is to focus not on religious education but on civic education instead. Robert Haas (1994, pp. 30–31) contends that the efficacy of religious education at school is disputable. Religious values are not attained by just teaching them in schools; he argues, they have to be lived, practised and experienced. Such values are transmitted mainly through the example of parents, teachers and other authorities and should be reinforced by various institutions. According to Haas:

[T]here is no empirical evidence that people, who have been educated according to religious teachings and values, would be less prone to acts of violence and other forms of misbehaviour.... [T]here exists no statistical proof whatsoever that atheists have a significantly higher crime rate than others, or that they are less reliable in principle (Haas, 1994, pp. 27–28).

Haas is therefore a proponent of civic education which is committed to educating students to be democratically minded, to know their rights and duties to the State and to each other. Such civic education should develop the values of mutual tolerance, hard work, reliability, thrift, belief in the value of education, self-help and the family (Haas, 1994, pp. 22–30).

Conclusion

Religion, as a social construct, has always been closely associated with politics. Political leaders have often exploited the religious beliefs and sentiments of the Japanese people. This was certainly the case in the period from the Meiji Restoration until 1945. Many argue that Conservative politicians are currently once again attempting to manipulate the religious sentiments and the social disappointments and frustrations of the Japanese people. They fear that the proposed revision of the Japanese Constitution may not offer any innovative or creative solutions, but may result merely in a return to the old and dangerous pre-1945 slogans and models.

In 2005, religious education in Japanese public schools is ambiguous and pessimistic, and lacking in openness to a ‘new morality’ relevant for an ‘era of globalisation’. The challenge is for the religious teachings of Shinto to be modified

to fit the 21st century, just as they were modified in the Meiji period for the purpose of unifying Japan under a politically and militaristically strong state. But the purpose of such a modification today is for the development of the ideals of tolerance, openness and inclusiveness, all of which can contribute to a more competitive and credible Japan in a globalised world.

I would like to see religious education (rather than merely civic education) being conducted in public schools. While I agree with many of Inoue's arguments, I contend that there should be more emphasis on the study of the specifics of Japanese religions, in particular folk religion, Shinto (which I hope will clarify its beliefs in the near future), shamanism, Japanese Buddhism, and the New Religions. All these religions should be studied in their social and historical contexts. Religious education in Japan should be based on the religious beliefs and social values of the Japanese people. These beliefs should be carefully reinterpreted in accordance with global cultural trends for the purpose of religious education, which should be committed to mutual tolerance, compassion and respect for others and their beliefs.

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THE SCHOOL IN PARTNERSHIP: CO-OPERATION WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN PROVIDING FOR RELIGIOUS, MORAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Rev. Mary Petersen

Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish, Coromandel Peninsula, New Zealand

Introduction

The history of schooling in New Zealand is about partnership between communities, including in the provision of opportunities for religious, moral and spiritual growth. Yet the real partnership between school and parents and the local community was not explicitly acknowledged or defined in educational policy until 1989. At that time, while major political revolutions were occurring in Europe as walls separating east from west were falling and new regimes were coming into being, the results of a New Zealand political and economic revolution devolved responsibility for many aspects of New Zealand society to local communities. This became especially obvious in education.

Historical Development

In order to understand the development of educational policy in New Zealand in relationship to religious, moral and spiritual growth, it is necessary to comprehend the origins of the New Zealand population and the effects of historical settlement patterns on the development of schooling.

When the first organised British settlers arrived in New Zealand from 1840 onwards, the Maori had probably already been 'settled' for around a thousand years. Maori society recognised all of life as connected and integrated with spirituality. Education for Maori children incorporated experiential learning about every aspect of life and storytelling that included particular attention to genealogy and the

ongoing spiritual connectedness with ancestors. From the early 1800's Christian missionaries established the first 'schools' for Maori children, using the Bible as the textbook for learning English. Churches also provided the first schools for children of the British settlers. In 1841 the Roman Catholic Church opened its first school in Auckland. An Anglican school followed in 1842, a Wesleyan school in 1846 and a Presbyterian school in 1849 (see Butcher, 1932, p. 12). There has never been a State church or a State religion in New Zealand. Indeed many of the early settlers came to escape the class system and associated religious practices. Yet some regions were settled by particular denominational groups. Otago was a Presbyterian settlement and thus the schools were mainly Presbyterian. Canterbury was an Anglican settlement with Anglican schools. Wellington was officially a non-sectarian settlement and became the stronghold of private (non-church) enterprise in education.

Sir George Grey's Education Ordinance of 1847 was the first attempt to provide government policy for education and, following the British example, religious education was very firmly in the syllabus. Clause 3 specified: 'in every school to be established or supported by public funds under the provisions of the Ordinance, religious education, industrial training and instruction in the English language shall form a necessary part of the system to be pursued therein' (Butcher, 1932, p. 4). In Anglican Canterbury, however, in 1853 Superintendent Fitzgerald had no intention of putting public funds into schooling. He asked the Canterbury Provincial Council 'in what manner and to what extent ought the State to interfere [with the churches] in the education of the young?' (Butcher, 1932, p. 192).

The Secular Clause

By 1877 provincial councils had been replaced by a national government based in Wellington. The 1877 Education Act clearly made primary school education the responsibility of the State and that education was to be 'free, compulsory and secular'. Much of New Zealand's debate about the religious, moral and spiritual dimension of education from that time onwards has centred on the meaning of this secular clause. Also, from that time onwards, religious education has never been recognised as part of the curriculum taught by State school teachers. Nor does State teacher training include any reference to religious education. This is a real legacy of the secular clause. In 1877 no definition of 'secular' was provided but various interpretations were applied to the clause. Some assumed that secular teaching meant that no Bible readings or religious observances should happen in school. Some thought it simply meant the deletion of opening (religious) exercises, (McGeorge & Snook, 1981, p. 9). Others saw clear provision being made in the Act for voluntary religious teaching to be permitted in school buildings outside of the hours fixed for secular instruction, (Breward, 1967 p. 17 and Blamires, 1960 p. 16). For some it was the logical extension of the settlement of New Zealand by people who were determined to create a new society based on anti-establishment secularisation

(Arnold, 1973, p. 11). The irony is that the secular clause was incorporated in the 1877 Act, and subsequently in the 1914 and the 1964 Education Acts, in order to avoid denominational rivalry, not to avoid any religious teaching (New Zealand Parliamentary debates 25, 1877, p. 243; McGeorge, 1993, pp. 10–13).

Responses to the Secular Clause

After 1877 there were four distinct Christian responses to the secular clause. Firstly there was the development of private church schools, particularly by the Roman Catholic Church. Secondly there was a greater use of Sunday Schools in Protestant churches. Thirdly there was political lobbying to amend the law. Between 1877 and 1935 there were 42 unsuccessful private member's bills seeking to repeal the secular clause. The Bible in Schools League was formed to co-ordinate these efforts to challenge the law. Finally, clergy took religious instruction in schools when the schools were officially closed for half an hour and when non-secular teaching might occur. Although this began as early as 1878 with Anglican clergy in Canterbury teaching their own flock, the system eventually became known as the Nelson system after ministers of different denominations co-operated in Nelson in 1897. Each taught whole classes, without reference to the denominational allegiance of any particular pupil.

Partnership Between Schools and the Local Community

The Nelson System of Religious Education: An Example of Partnership

The distinctive feature of the Nelson system that enabled it to continue through to the present day was co-operation within the local community. By 1930 10% of New Zealand primary schools followed the Nelson system. The churches worked together to make this happen and in 1941 established the Education Commission of the National Council of Churches to oversee the teaching and to develop and provide suitable resources. By 1965 about 50% of children in New Zealand primary schools received this form of religious instruction (Breward, 1967, pp. 98–99). In 1994 70% of primary school children were involved in this form of Christian Religious Education commonly known as *Bible In Schools* (Churches Education Commission, National Survey data, unpublished). From the 1950s onwards the voluntary teachers were no longer just clergy. The first training course had been offered for lay people in 1953. By 1994 there were more than 5,000 voluntary teachers with less than 10% of these being ordained clergy.

The Churches Education Commission, formed in 1973, took over responsibility for Religious Education in State primary schools and by the 1990s provided not only resources but also a national system of training and accreditation for all voluntary teachers. This system was acknowledged and endorsed by the Ministry of Education and the School Trustees Association. Although the acceptance of the Nelson system grew steadily from 1897 onwards, it was not until 1962 that it was officially

recognised in law and educational policy. The Currie Commission report of 1962 stated, 'it seems incontrovertible that a majority of New Zealand parents would wish their children to have some form of introduction to religion' (Currie, 1962, p. 682). The 1962 *Religious Instruction and Observances Act* formally recognised the Nelson system and permitted school committees to legally allow voluntary teachers into the school at a mutually convenient time, not exceeding 30 minutes a week or 20 hours a year.

A policy adjustment was made in 1964 that authorised the Minister of Education to permit additional religious instruction only 'where the Minister is satisfied that the majority of the parents of pupils attending a school wish their children to receive religious instruction additional to that specified... (and)... that such additional religious instruction will not be to the detriment of the normal curriculum of the school' (Education Act, 1964, Section 78A). So parents were recognised as having a say in what happened with their children's religious education but the power for decision making was still with the government.

Community Involvement in 'Moral' Education

The moral responsibility of the State for providing education for the whole community can be deduced from a couple of interesting developments. In 1905 the Auckland Education Board reported that the 'Board very properly realises that the only limit to the encouragement of technical education should be the ability of the community to defray expenses, and has cordially assisted its director to make a success of the important department placed in his care' (New Zealand Herald, November 8, 1905). At that time technical education had been provided through night classes and was seen as an important way of providing for the moral education of young men in order to develop their trade skills and thereby keep them busy and off the streets. The Auckland Education Board proposed to offer daytime technical education as well through the schools. In the 1930s the concern for moral education in the community was such that home-craft was introduced as a subject in the school syllabus to ensure that all young women were well trained for their responsibilities in the home.

The Growth of Private Schools

The 1877 Education Act made no provision for any financial support from the State for schools controlled by the church (Currie, 1962, p. 676). The Catholic Church began to lobby for reform immediately, with 300 petitions between 1878 and 1891 (Lee, 1993, p. 40). The Education Act of 1914 still offered no financial support for private schools and the church continued to agitate. This ferment intensified after 1944 when an educational policy statement welcomed 'diversity' in New Zealand schools and encouraged private schools to 'develop a character of their own' but still provided no financial support (Mason, 1945, p. 70). It took till 1964 before some subsidies were provided for private schools for equipment, heating and lighting, and the salaries of ancillary staff.

It was not until 1975, however, that church schools were permitted to integrate into the State system without jeopardising their 'special character', through the *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act*. 'Private schools would be entitled to full State aid only if they satisfied certain statutory requirements' (Lee, 1993, p. 46) which included strict standards about the state of their buildings. Schools had to 'define their 'special character' in the integration agreement signed by the school proprietors and the Minister of Education; thereby assuring them of legal protection' (Marshall & Hoff, 1984, p. 134). Schools also had to restrict the number of children attending whose families did not align themselves with the special character to no more than 5% of the school roll. School proprietors were permitted to 'tag' some teaching positions as being 'special' and require applicants to have 'willingness and ability to take part in religious instruction appropriate to that school' (Listener, October 24, 1981, p. 24).

By 1981 all Catholic schools had become integrated schools. In the Integration Agreements the Special Character of Catholic Schools was defined as 'the school is a Roman Catholic school in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and its religious instructions and observances exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. These values are as expressed in the Scriptures and the practices, worship and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, as determined from time to time by the Roman Catholic Bishop of the diocese' (Finlay, 1997, p. 55).

The parents of the children enrolled in independent schools were delighted with the integration process and its financial implications. They had been paying fees to the school their children attended as well as paying taxes that went to public education. This marked a new phase of partnership. However, while this policy change appeared to be honouring the partnership between schools, parents and the local community, it caused much tension and controversy in the wider community, especially amongst those who believed that State schools were being run down as a result of this sharing of the resources with independent schools. In 1989 Jack Mulheron, Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Public Education, wrote in a *Letter to the Boards of Trustees of all New Zealand's Public Schools*:

'Our overwhelming concern has been with the downgrading and dismantling of the public education system in favour of one which will increase rather than lessen inequalities and create conditions whereby educational purposes could be restricted to narrow vocational goals or distorted by religious or philosophical indoctrination' (Listener, October 24, 1981 p. 24).

And so to 1989: Tomorrow's Schools

The Labour Government, which was elected to a landslide victory in 1984, began a major overhaul of many aspects of New Zealand society and when returned to power in 1987, continued the process. The Prime Minister, David Lange, had taken on the ministerial portfolio of education, signalling very clearly that reform of education was to be a top priority. In 1987 the Curriculum Review Process

enunciated key principles about 'the development of closer relationships between parents and teachers' and declared that 'the curriculum shall be co-operatively designed' (Ramset et al, 1990, p. 117). In 1988 these principles were reaffirmed by the report of the task group that reviewed educational administration in New Zealand, commonly known as the *Picot Report*.

Proposals enacted included disbanding the regional Education Boards and the national Department of Education. A new Ministry of Education would be responsible for overall policy but not for any of the practical tasks formerly provided by the Department and the Boards. The parents from each school community would elect a Board of Trustees for their school to replace the former School Committee. This Board would have responsibility for establishing and developing the school's identity and ethos, appointment of staff, purchase of equipment and services, management of finances and all the practical tasks of organising and maintaining a school—most of which had formerly been carried out by the regional education boards.

Partnership between the school and the local community was the key and the whole focus to the changes. For example, the resulting government White Paper stated:

In collaboration with the principal, the staff and the community, the Board will be responsible for the preparation of the institution's Charter . . . while the Board is responsible for the overall preparation of the Charter, the details will be determined by the community and the institution's teaching staff working together (Lange, 1988, pp. 3–4).

This radical government policy was called *Tomorrow's Schools* but when the first Boards of Trustees were elected in 1989, the 'today's school' that became a reality was variously received. Most communities warmly, if cautiously, welcomed the opportunity to be more involved in vital decision-making. A board that included community leaders, a lawyer, an accountant, plumbers and builders had the networks it might need to carry out all its responsibilities. Some school communities, however, were composed almost entirely of solo parents and unemployed families where there was potential for struggle to carry out the responsibilities they were to assume (anecdotal evidence collected by the author). However, not all the proposed aspects of the working of *Tomorrow's Schools* lasted for long. For example, within three years the *Parent Advocacy Council*, trumpeted as a way for parents to get extra support or advocacy help in a variety of situations, had disappeared with the first round of budget cuts.

Not all of the changes made in the name of parent and community choice and partnership achieved their intended result. For example, there was considerable change in the way funding was provided for the education of children with special needs. Before *Tomorrow's Schools*, funding was allocated to particular schools to provide facilities and staff to support special needs children, including the severely disabled. The Department of Education had decided which schools would have that funding and where particular special units would be provided and staffed. Under

a development of the *Tomorrow's Schools* policy in the mid-1990s, the funding was attached to each child, and the parents could decide which school they wanted their children to attend. This certainly provided parental choice but it also meant that no school had any guarantee that it would attract sufficient numbers of special needs children to have sufficient funding to provide staff and appropriate facilities. Naenae College, a State secondary school in the Hutt Valley near Wellington, for example, had formerly been identified as the major provider of education for special needs children for the whole Hutt region. By 1998 it had seven units or programmes providing different kinds of support for students with special needs from a unit for very severely disabled children who were delivered to school each morning in the beds they were unable to leave and whose fulltime caregivers were qualified nurses, through a support unit for children with ADHD and Asperger's Syndrome who spent most of their time in the special unit but joined ordinary classes for an occasional subject, to a Learning and Behaviour Support Teacher and teacher aides who assisted some children to spend most of their time in ordinary classes. For the Board of Trustees of this State school the dilemma, of how to continue to offer this level and range of support options for those who needed it, had a distinct moral and spiritual dimension (the author was chairperson of the Naenae College Board's subcommittee for Special Education in 1999).

Partnership in the Religious, Spiritual and Moral Dimension of Education in 2005

'One of the most pervasive themes emerging from research and discourse in recent years has been the desirability of educational partnership. The theme has been expressed in a variety of ways—as parent consultation, as school community relations, as the participation of parents and teachers, and more generally as a requirement for enlightened educational leadership' (Ramsay et al., 1990, p. 117). This statement is taken from the report of Project CRRISP, completed in 1990, which investigated the partnership practices of twenty-eight schools with a particular focus on 'ways to inform and involve parents in school decision making' (Ramsay et al., 1990, p. 117). The project report concluded that 'Government has got it right in challenging the boundaries between home and school, and between school and community,' (Ramsay et al., 1990, p. 117). So what has happened to this boundary challenging process and resulting partnerships between school, parents and community in the dimensions of religious, moral and spiritual growth in recent years?

The New Zealand Curriculum Framework specifies seven essential learning areas and eight groupings of essential skills areas to be covered *and* insists that all students are to be given the opportunity to develop *attitudes* and *values*. It is particularly in this area of attitudes and values that partnership between schools, parents and the community has been encouraged.

Yet the attitudes and values of New Zealanders in 2005 are somewhat elusive and rather different from those of 100 years ago or fifty or even 10 years ago.

New Zealand's population has changed, apart from the international trends and global interconnections that are also having an effect. The 2001 census of New Zealand's population of four million indicated that 80% classed themselves as being of European origin. One in seven people identified themselves as Maori. One in fifteen, or 240,000, were of Asian origin and 231,801 were from the Pacific islands. Projections for the future changes in population indicate much higher growth rates for the Maori, Pacific and Asian populations than for those of European origin, partly because they already represent much higher percentages in younger age groups, (NZ Government statistics, retrieved November, 2005, from www.govt.nz).

In the last fifteen years in New Zealand, in common with international trends, there has been a resurgence of interest in spirituality while adherence to formal religious institutions has declined. In New Zealand, this interest includes a new awareness of the connectedness of Maori spirituality with all of life, and the potential value that this attitude has for all people. All New Zealand schools are required to include attention to Maori language, cultural values and history - and this includes spirituality. There are Maori schools that teach everything in the Maori language and through a Maori world-view. Known as *Kura Kaupapa*, they naturally have their motto or mission statement in the Maori language. Many use a traditional Maori proverb to affirm their allegiance to traditional values and heritage. Some State schools that are not *Kura Kaupapa* also use Maori proverbs to delineate their philosophy. For example, Owhiro Bay School in Wellington bases all its action on *E tipu e rea* (in our children lies our future). Te Kura Kaupapa Maori o Piripino, a school in Otara, South Auckland, has as its motto: *Ko te wehi ki a Ihowa te timatanga o te matauranga* (the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom " - a translation of Psalm 111:10").

One of the intriguing anomalies of the changes instituted in 1989 was that the word 'spiritual' began to appear in government curriculum documents. Some Ministry of Education policy officials commented that this was really to acknowledge how significant Maori spirituality was to every aspect of Maori life. Others admitted that it also recognised that there was potential for a spiritual aspect for everyone's life. In the draft *Health and Physical Education syllabus* of 1993, *taha wairua* (things of the spirit) was identified as a key area contributing to good health. Every school was expected to consult with its community about the content of the Health Syllabus. However in some State schools with 400 families only five people turned up to discuss such matters! And these were often those who were already on the Board of Trustees.

The Attitudes and Values section of the National Curriculum Framework states: 'no schooling is value-free. Values are mostly learned through students' experience of the total environment, rather than through direct instruction...The content of a school's curriculum reflects what is valued by a society and a school community...The school's curriculum will help students to develop and clarify their own values and beliefs, and to respect and be sensitive to the rights of individuals, families and groups to hold values and attitudes which are different from their own' (see, www.tki.org.nz/governance/nzcf/).

In practice, this has meant that each school has sought to consult with its community to identify what kind of 'total environment' the school should be fostering. This consultation and partnership has resulted in some statements that clearly reflect a particular community. In 2004 there were only 114 independent schools in New Zealand out of a total of 2,627 schools but these independent schools generally have a clear focus on what their community is about. For example: in Wellington, Kadimah College includes in its description of the school: 'this is a place where Jewish values are modelled and individuality is recognised.' Or again, the Coromandel Rudolf Steiner School maintains: 'we want our children to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind and spirit, secure in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society'. Or, Zayed College for Girls in South Auckland asserts in its mission statement that it 'provides quality education in an Islamic environment to prepare our young women to confidently participate in society and fulfil their role as da'iah of Allah subhanahu wa Ta'ala' (see www.tki.org.nz/governance/nzcf/).

As for specific aims referring to Religious Education, the Anglican Huntley School states: 'the aims of our Religious Education programme are to help students understand and share in the faith tradition of Huntley School and to mature and respond in faith' (Huntley School, RE Curriculum, 2005). One of the thirteen Presbyterian schools, St Andrew's College in Christchurch includes several pages of definition, guiding principles and rationale as well as aims about its Religious Education course. One stated aim is that 'Religious education aims at deepening young people's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Christian faith tradition, of other religions and of contemporary religious issues'. The methods used to achieve the aims include 'critical reflection, dialogue and debate' (St. Andrew's College, Religious Education Department, Course Plan, 2005).

State School Partnerships

96% of schools in New Zealand are, however, State schools and unless they are integrated schools, they do not have any formal religious education included in their curriculum. Yet their ethos, and their charter statements, developed in partnership with the community, may well include acknowledgement of spirituality, a particular approach to values education and a commitment to encourage growth in their students' understanding of acceptable morality. A small but growing number of schools, at all levels, are including philosophy in their curriculum. Matthew Lipman's Philosophy with children (or P4C) 'is taught in more than 30 countries worldwide, sometimes to children as young as four' (Rodwell, 2001, p. 26).

Although there has been a dramatic decline in the numbers of people completing the religious question on the census form, the 2001 census still showed over 2 million, more than half the population, owning allegiance to Christianity. So it is still acceptable to more than 60% of the Boards of Trustees of New Zealand primary schools to approve the volunteer programme that offers Christian Religious Education from a perspective which demonstrates sensitivity and awareness of

other religious beliefs and practices. In 2005, over 60% of State primary schools still allow volunteer teachers to come in once a week for the Christian Religious Education programme administered by the Churches Education Commission. This arrangement models partnership between the school and the local community and is similar to the scheme operating in several Australian States. Indeed the curriculum that the Churches Education Commission recommends, *Religion in Life*, is published in Australia and used in many Australian schools as well as in South Africa. There is also another approved curriculum, *Life Focus*, developed in New Zealand, particularly for use when one person takes a large group of several classes together. This resource makes clear connections with approaches and strands of the New Zealand curriculum.

The Churches Education Commission is also responsible for introducing a Chaplaincy scheme for State schools, to support the school's pastoral care network. More than 200 State schools currently have chaplains in this volunteer role. Chaplains only operate in a school when the Board of Trustees, representing the parents, has agreed. This too is a model of partnership between community and school.

Conclusion

New Zealand education models partnership between schools and their communities. Cooperation with parents is officially encouraged by government educational policy, at least since 1989. Although 'religious' growth may rarely be a specified aim, there is considerable concern for moral and spiritual growth evident in some aspect of the Charter and Principles of most State schools. While New Zealand's education system and policy is unique, there are many international connections and comparisons.

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata
What matters is . . . people, people, people.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, GENDER AND EQUALITY

Dr Caroline Renehan

Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University

Introduction

Gender, Education and Religious Education

There can be no serious discussion about gender pertaining to any society, or any debate either in education or religious education, without some prior reference to gender equality. In the Republic of Ireland, policies of social equality have become increasingly important. They have touched on virtually every aspect of life in Ireland at personal, economic, political and educational levels. The need to ensure gender equality throughout the education system was highlighted in the (Republic of Ireland's) Department of Education and Science's (DES) *Green Paper* on education as one of the requirements to which the 'Irish educational system must adapt' (Green Paper, 1992, p. 9). The *White Paper* on education (DES, 1995, pp. 7, 43) includes equality as one of the educational principles in its philosophical rationale. It views, 'equality as one of the overall aims of second level education' and makes specific reference to 'gender in the realm of equality'. In the *Education Act* (DES, 1998, pars. 12, 19) 'equality of access to and participation in education', is one of its main objectives. It states that one of the functions of a school is, 'to promote equality of opportunity for both male and female students and staff'. Gender barriers were also acknowledged by the government *White Paper on Adult Education* (DES, 2000, par. 13) as, 'hindering the emergence of a fully inclusive and cohesive society'. Here again, equality with particular reference to gender was included as one of its core principles.

So how far have we moved in Ireland in terms of raising the level of awareness of gender equality that pertains to the teaching of religious education? The introduction of the State's *Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus* (DES, 2003) addresses gender equality in relation to the teaching of religion at secondary level. This new syllabus, for senior cycle pupils, includes a section entitled, 'Religion and

Gender'. This section reflects the current realities on gender matters and attempts to counter gender inequalities in society and in religion. This is evident from its stated aims, which are as follows:

1. To develop a knowledge and understanding of the role of gender in religious experience and tradition.
2. To explore the relationship between gender roles in societies and religions, in particular the Christian traditions.
3. To develop an awareness of the particular contribution of women to the development of religious traditions.

Empirical Research into Gender Issues, Religious Educators, and Religious Education

Within that context of gender equality, the author engaged in gender-based empirical research to explore differences in attitudes between male and female student teachers of religious education. This involved selecting three theological issues and analysing the significance of the findings for the teaching of two topics which form part of the 'Religion and Gender' section of the Leaving Certificate syllabus (DES, 2003, pars. 51–58). These syllabus topics were 'gender perspectives on empowerment and exclusion', and '[awareness] of the roles of women and men . . . and the connection between images of God and understandings of these roles'. The resultant gender analyses was prompted by two general research questions: firstly, 'are there differential attitudes towards theological issues between male and female student teachers of religious education?', and secondly, 'are gender differential attitudes in theological issues likely to have implications for the teaching and learning of the 'Religion and Gender' section of the Irish Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus'?

The Research Sample and the Research Methodology

What follows is a synopsis of a larger work (Renehan, 2005). The student teachers that took part in the research were in their final year of preparation for teaching in secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland. Two research instruments were used; a general survey administered in partnership with the eight Education Departments in Universities or Colleges of Education responsible for initial teacher education in the Republic of Ireland and a follow-up interview schedule administered to student teachers in one College of Education specialising in the professional development of religious educators. The implications of the student teachers responses for the teaching of the 'Religion and Gender' section of the syllabus was also considered throughout.

Paper-and Pencil Surveys: 170 surveys were forwarded to all of the eight third level institutes involved in the initial teacher education of second level teachers in the Republic of Ireland. 133 completed questionnaires were returned. The weighting

of 104 female respondents to 29 male respondents reflects the greater number of females to males in undergraduate teacher education in the Republic of Ireland (Drudy, et al., 2002). The data was entered into the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for gender differential analysis.

Follow-up Interviews

The research methodology also included follow-up interviews with respondents in one College of Education which specialised in the initial teacher education of future teachers of Religious Education. The questions discussed during the one-to-one interviews were virtually the same as those considered in the questionnaire. A final year group of 65 student teachers was approached and 18 volunteers (9 male and 9 female) came forward. Excerpts of their responses are given in what follows.

Research Findings Concerning Gender Differences on Issues Related to Gender and Religion

Analysis of three core questions concerning gender and theological issues revealed significant differentials between the male and female student teachers. These questions (Q36, Q35, and Q37) related to (i) the student teachers' attitudes to the ordination of women in the Christian tradition; (ii) whether or not teachers should approach the question of women's ordination with their pupils during RE lessons; and (iii) a question exploring the association between the maleness of Christ and imaging God as male.

Women as 'Imaging Christ' Through Ordination

Currently, in the tradition of Catholic Christianity, women cannot represent Christ as ordained priests for a number of reasons one of which includes their physical appearance. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF, 1976, pp. 12–13) states, 'the priest, who alone has the power to perform (the Eucharist) then acts only through the effective power conferred on him by Christ, in *persona Christi*, taking the role of Christ, to the point of being his very image'. Respondents exhibited low levels of acceptance of the statement (Q.36) 'women should not be priests because they do not image Christ in their physical appearance'. Only 7.3% of respondents agreed with the statement; while 24% of male respondents were in agreement, only 3% of female respondents were in agreement. This difference between respondents when grouped according to gender was highly statistically significant (Independent Samples Test, $t = -3.566$, $p = 0.001$).

The low level of agreement with the official stance of the Catholic Church suggests that the majority of the student teachers surveyed, both male and female, did not attach any importance to physical appearance for ordination. Two possible reasons for the gender difference include, firstly, that the male respondents either did not want to see the *status quo* changed or it was of no consequence to them

Table 1. Independent Samples Test
Equal variances not assumed

t-test for Equality of Means							
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Women should not be priests because they do not image Christ in their physical appearance	−3.566	32.716	.001	−.91	.256	−1.435	−.392

(this was less likely to be the case with the female respondents), and secondly, that the male respondents included among their number those who had not yet studied the debate concerning women’s ordination and among the female respondents this was less likely to be the case.

Sample Responses from the Follow-up Interviews

Question 36 was further considered in the follow-up interviews with a sub-sample of respondents. Male student teachers responded to the question concerning the inability of women ‘image Christ’ as ordained priests as follows:

- Response M1: I have trouble with that statement. There was no problem with females in the early Christian Church. I find it hard to believe that Christ would have a problem with women priests. It’s time it was at least discussed by the Church authorities; I did not know that not imaging Christ in physical appearance was the reason for one of the main bars on women priests. I thought it had something to do with the fact that women were not part of the apostles.*
- Response M2: If they wanted to look hard enough they could find a way to enable women to become priests, I think they should start having a look at it anyway... not just on the equality thing, it goes deeper than that. If we are all the one community, like St. Paul says, I don’t see why women can’t be seen to image Christ.*
- Response M3: I do not think women should be priests. It is important to have a male leading the Eucharistic meal... tradition is an important part of the Church. I agree with the statement and if I saw a woman dressed in men’s clothes on the altar it would look incongruous.*

Response M4: The tradition of male only priests should be respected. As far as women with a serious vocation are concerned, they should be accommodated into some ministry but not sacramental ordination. There should be something there for women whatever that might be but not ordination.

Female student teachers responded to the question concerning the inability of women 'imaging Christ' as ordained priests as follows:

Response F1: I disagree totally with this statement. Women can bring a different slant to our faith so the physical appearance should have nothing to do with it. It is commitment that counts, not the sex of the person saying the Mass.

Response F2: That is absolutely ridiculous. Christ did not have blue eyes and blond hair. In the Western world, we continually change the image of Christ through paintings and things. Black priests are not in the image of Christ.

Response F3: Physical appearance is never acceptable for not allowing someone to do something. I can't believe I am even hearing this. Why are we even having to ask that question in this day and age?

Response F4: No, this is ridiculous. God is manifest in both sexes. Crazy. Christ could only have been a man culturally at that time or his message would not have been listened to. The statement is not a valid theological reason.

Discussion

Two of the male student teachers felt strongly that women should not be permitted ordination arguing that church teaching had to be upheld. One of the male interviewees did not have any difficulty with women being allowed ordination simply because they do not image Christ in physical appearance, and the other was acceptant but hesitant about female ordination. In both these instances, the respondents attempted to provide a theological rationale with one saying that women played a major role in the early Church and the other making reference to Paul (Galatians 3:28) that all human beings being recreated equally in Christ. The other two male interviewees approached the question from a more traditional stance. One was unable to accept a woman taking the place of Christ at the Eucharistic meal believing this to be only the prerogative of men. His response was argued on the grounds of the importance of physical appearance, even to the incongruity of women wearing the official vestments of the ordained priest. The other male interviewed was trying to find a way forward for women in the Church in that some useful ministry might be found but it could not be ordination. Both these latter responses suggest a stance concerning traditional church teaching that may never be open to considering other perspectives.

All of the female student teachers felt strongly that the ordination of women should be permitted and that the physical appearance of the minister should not be a factor. They believed that church teaching on the matter was ridiculous.

Table 2. Independent Samples Test
Equal variances not assumed

t-test for Equality of Means							
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Women teaching, the question of ordination to the priesthood for women should be approached with the pupils	2.366	38.015	.023	.50	.212	.073	.931

None of the female respondents had any difficulty around the question of the ordination of women. In fact, there was some level of indignation shown by the responses against the question posed. Thus, one noticeable difference between the male and the female interviewees was the intensity of the responses coming from the female students. Words of indignation from the females, even at the very thought of having to defend their answers in the affirmative, comes across in the vocabulary they used. For example, ‘disagree totally’, ‘absolutely ridiculous’, ‘can’t believe I am hearing this’. Again, however, like the male interviewees, these were not theological arguments and it was evident that the female student teachers were not sufficiently conversant with the theological, anthropological and scriptural arguments surrounding the matter.

*Willingness to Consider the Issue of Women’s
Ordination Within RE Lessons*

The above gender differences give rise to the related question (Q.35) ‘when teaching, the question of ordination to the priesthood for women should be approached with the pupils’. There was very high agreement with this statement, with 89.3% of all respondents, 70.8% of male respondents and 94.4% of female respondents indicating a level of agreement. Once again the difference between males and females were highly significant (Independent Samples Test, $t = 2.366$, $p = 0.023$).

It can be asked as to why anybody entering the teaching profession would not be prepared to raise questions central to Religious Education, even controversial questions, with the pupils they teach. For those who did not want to broach the controversial issue of women’s ordination, particularly the males, this may have been because, a) they saw their churches’ teaching on certain matters to be beyond question whereas the female respondents did not; b) they did not see the matter

as significant enough to warrant debate in class, whereas the female respondents did; c) there was a patriarchal bias in the male respondents' mindset; or d) that the male respondents feared reprisals from their churches, the school, parents and pupils if they raised the question, whereas the female respondents were less concerned.

Sample Responses from the Follow-up Interviews

The following is a sample of the interview responses of male student teachers to the question: 'do you think that the subject of ordination for women to the priesthood should be approached with the pupils?'

Response M5: I think it should be discussed but if the teacher has a prejudice for or against the topic, or a personal agenda, it should not be discussed because I think there would be arguments between the boys and the girls.

Response M6: The days of putting things in closets are gone. I should imagine it could be a tough one to teach because the boys would have none of it and the girls would want it discussed. I would be nervous to raise it in class.

Response M7: I don't see why not. It is an ongoing issue for the Church. If the lads don't want to discuss it, too bad, they are members of the Church too. They need to know what is going on.

Response M8: It would depend on the class I was teaching, the girls would say 'yes' and the boys would say 'no'. If I felt I could debate it without trouble from the pupils I would do so, if not I would avoid it.

The following are a sample of the responses from female student teachers:

Response F5: Yes, definitely. Some of the girls might want to be priests and you would need to know the arguments as to why they can't be. I wish I knew a bit more about it myself. I think it is a very complex issue.

Response F6: I think it would be beneficial, especially at Leaving Cert level. I do not like the idea of pupils not knowing what the debate is about; there are too many opinions in shared ignorance on this matter.

Response F7: I would not be reluctant to deal with it. It is an issue that the Church needs to deal with and it's about time something was done about it.

Response F8: Yes, women are members of the Church just like men. It is a relevant issue and pupils should be taught to work out their own opinions on it.

Discussion

The male student teachers were concerned that there might be a contentious debate between the boys and the girls as a result of raising the issue of women's ordination in RE class. However they would not in principle have any difficulty about raising

the question and trying to deal with it. Nonetheless, there was a notable reluctance to do so particularly when they felt there would be a contentious debate. They believed that the boys would not be in agreement with the ordination of women and that the girls would. In this respect, they feared that an argument might break out with the boys arguing against women's ordination and the girls arguing in favour of it. Arguments of a contentious nature, particularly with respect to Church teaching, the males held, were best left alone. One male interviewee, however, is notable in that he was not concerned if the boys had a difficulty with the nature of the topic and that, if it needed to be discussed, he would not avoid it.

The female student teachers were not concerned should a difficulty arise and believed that it was an important topic for discussion. For them, it was simply a matter of dealing with it as it arose in the context of their lessons. They argued that some girls might want to be priests and they would need to know why Catholic Church teaching would not permit it. They also argued that pupils would need to know the counter arguments raised by theologians. In this case, pupils would ask questions on the subject and would be entitled to informed teaching and the opportunity to dialogue about both sides of the debate. Besides, the female student teachers thought that it was time something was done about the ordination of women from the Catholic Church's perspective so discussion on it would be educationally advantageous. However, two of the female interviewees, who said they would like to be able to debate the matter in class, did not feel they had enough competence in the field to do so. This suggests that the subject was not raised with them to a satisfactory extent during either their second or third level education.

Imaging God as Male

Where there is evidence of patriarchal thinking, God will normally be imaged as male. According to Ruether (1983) such thinking became the norm and the divinity was assumed to be male. Q.37 invited respondents to consider their image of God as follows: 'when teaching, it makes sense to say that if Christ is male, then the God he images must also be male'. The level of agreement with this statement was very low (11% of respondents 'agreed' with the statement; 14.3% of males 'agreed' and 10.3% of females). Once again the differences between males and females was nevertheless statistically significant (Independent Samples Test, $t = 2.288$, $p = 0.024$).

There are a number of possibilities for these differential responses: a) that the traditional belief that God is male may be more strongly reinforced in the male respondents than in the female respondents; b) that the male respondents could not relate to an image of God that was not consistent in image with their own sex, and that this image did not resonate to the same extent with the female respondents; or c) that the male respondents either had not been exposed to the idea that there are gendered ways of imaging God or that they were not open to accepting such images, whereas the female respondents had been and were willing to accept them.

Table 3. Independent Samples Test

Equal variances not assumed

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
When teaching, it makes sense to say that if Christ is male then the God he images must also be male	1.015	.316	-2.288	129	.024	-.47	.206	-.877	-.064

Sample Responses from the Follow-up Interviews:

The following are a sample of the responses of male student teachers to the statement 'since Christ is male, the God he images must therefore be male':

Response M9: I was always taught that God is male. The mother of God is female. I believe God is male. It follows that if Christ is male then God is male.

Response M10: No it is impossible to argue that God is male. I have difficulty in describing the stupidity of that statement. It is a huge concept, only when you begin to study theology do you begin to realise how little you know. I know Christ is male but it does not follow that God is male.

Response M11: I would have to say that God would be a man. Christ is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. It follows logically, therefore, that God is male.

Response M12: I try to avoid using gender terms when referring to God. I do not think it necessarily follows that if Christ is male then God must be male. Exclusive male imaging is not acceptable to Christian teaching.

The following is a sample of the responses of female student teachers to the same statement:

Response F9: I do not agree that God is to be defined in terms of gender. Sure, Christ was a man, but there is more to God than Christ.

Response F10: No, this is another crazy statement. God is manifest in all created realities. Christ is his image and likeness, but not through gender.

Response F11: I think this is to do with how you are educated. God is always taken as male in tradition, so I have no understanding of thinking of God as otherwise, equally so with Christ.

Response F12: I was brought up to believe that God is male and we know Christ is male. We looked at images of God [in class] but not female ones.

Discussion: There were variant answers among the males. The question focused on the maleness of Christ, stating that because this is so, does it follow that God is a man? Two male interviewees argued that indeed such was the case. Another argued on the grounds that since Mary is female then God must be male, but this argument does not hold ground theologically. The other male interviewee argued that God is male on Trinitarian grounds by introducing Christ as the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. He claimed that this is a logical argument. While he was correct in saying that Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is male, it is not logical to assume that God is male, nor does his argument have a theological base (Lane, 1975). The other two male interviewees were quite adamant that there is no relationship between the maleness of Christ and the necessity of imaging God in male terms.

Equally, two of the female interviewees have variant views among themselves arguing that the maleness of Christ suggests how God must be imaged. They both noted that they had never been presented with images of God that were other than male. One claims that she had no other understanding but of a male image of God and the other claimed that, while she had studied various images of God in class, none of them were female images. Taking both the male and female student teacher responses into account, it is clear that the traditional image of God as male remains co-existent with more liberal images. The above responses suggest that there were little difference between males and females when it came to imaging God as male.

Implications for Education and RE

Gender differences were evident between future teachers of Religious Education in their responses to all three of the above statements. These differences may not be conducive to the learning of the future pupils they will teach. They point to attitudes, particularly on the part of some of the male respondents, which may prevent future pupils from constructing, debating or reflecting upon their own understanding of theological doctrine. Such pupils may follow the direction of their teachers without having the chance even to air their views on contentious theological issues. The gender differences also imply that particularly some of the male student teachers may have been products of a transmission model of education, one that had not permitted them to reflect critically on what they are expected to teach.

The evidence of the continuing existence of gender differences raises questions for religious educators as teachers of religious ideas, for social mobility and for the

ultimate realisation of an egalitarian society. Religious educators are meant to act as agents of legitimisation helping pupils to internalise their hopes and aspirations with the opportunities that are open to them in religious education classes. The gender differences evident in the research also imply that those responsible for initial teacher education must raise the level of awareness of possible prejudices on the part of student teachers in order to liberate them from gender prejudices which belong to a past worldview.

In summary, statistically significant differences were found between the male and female student teachers of religious education. Sometimes these were manifested as gender stereotyping attitudes. Such attitudes are not conducive either to the requirements of teacher professionalism or to equality of treatment of pupils. Given that the school is one of society's main agents for socialising its young with regard to sex role recognition, such differences are potentially serious. This is especially so among student teachers of religious education whose role is to give meaning to the beliefs and values of those whom they teach. There is further cause for concern if one takes into account educational researchers such as Delamont (1983, p. 83) who holds that schools, 'not only do not challenge sex stereotypes existing in society but instead exaggerate them'. While it certainly cannot be argued that schools are solely responsible for sex-role socialisation, one can agree with Davies (1978, p. 18) that, 'school is an incomplete producer of social and sexual divisions in society'. If these perceptions are correct, it is likely that the perpetuation of sex stereotyping and sexual divisions will continue from one generation to the next in the context of schooling in general and in religious education in particular.

Conclusion

In the light of the gender differences reported above we can return to research question 1: *are there differential attitudes in theological issues between male and female student teachers of religious education?* and answer in the affirmative. With respect to research question 2: *are gender differential attitudes in theological issues likely to have implications for the teaching and learning of the 'Religion and Gender' section of the Irish Leaving Certificate religious education syllabus?* it can be concluded that some of the student teachers, particularly males, may find it difficult to teach in a manner which is faithful to the objectives of the syllabus. Furthermore, males may have greater difficulty taking into account the wider theological debate surrounding the issues raised, and may not realise that this debate legitimately follows a line of academic enquiry which is not necessarily contrary to Christian or Church teachings. It would appear, therefore, that a larger percentage of males, not excluding a smaller percentage of some of the females, have appropriated patterns of thought that, from a pedagogical perspective, may cast some doubt on their readiness or willingness to address contentious matters raised in the syllabus.

The gender differences found, however, do not necessarily mean that the syllabus is not to be recognised as an indispensable and valued source of learning. Nor does

it mean that the student teachers are not likely to learn from the content of the syllabus as they study it themselves with a view to teaching it. Rather, the student teachers' attitudes highlight the need for gender stereotyping and polarisation to be addressed within their programme of initial teacher education.. The objectives and content of the 'Religion and Gender' section of the syllabus are complex and putting them into practice will be compounded by the gender differentials evident above. Consequently, as part of their formation, student teachers may need to be encouraged to exercise a watchful balance on gender polarisation and gender stereotyping in their teaching and learn to recognise sex-role dichotomies that are likely to manifest themselves in gender inequality. This will enable student teachers to be true to the objectives and spirit of the syllabus and thus meet its challenges.

It should be noted that there can be a 'healthy pedagogy of difference' or, as Reynolds et al. (2001, p. 357) put it, 'in exploring a pedagogy of difference, we are proposing an approach to learning which will be alert to tendencies to suppress or assimilate differences, yet will not resign students to becoming irrevocably distanced as a result of their experience of them'. Gender differences in attitudes and classroom practices then are not necessarily negative; they can be both creative and healthily constraining at one and the same time. Gender differences only become a problem at the level of gendered social and religious predispositions where there is a belief that gender difference is genetically determined with each gender carrying a set of physical, emotional and psychological characteristics that it can never change.

The syllabus, with its gender thought provocation, is to be recognised and valued as a source of learning not only for pupils for whom it was designed but also for those who work from it as teachers and student teachers. This is the case for a number of reasons. Firstly, teachers must take account of, and reflect upon, the objectives of the syllabus. Secondly, it is the first religious education syllabus to have been produced in the Republic of Ireland to include specifically gender studies. Thirdly, study of the syllabus encourages student teachers to realise that they live in a structure of social and religious predispositions that may require closer scrutiny. Fourthly, student teachers in their own teaching and learning of the syllabus will be involved in a continual refashioning process which will encourage them to question whatever fundamental, not thought out, gender stereotypical attitudes and practices they may possess and begin to grasp the deeper issues concerning their professional lives and studies. Fifthly, the relationship between gender, society and religion as it is outlined in the syllabus, contributes towards the elimination of distortions brought about by gender stereotyping and leaves the way open for attitudes that are neither fixed nor constant. New interpretations on religion, gender and society are becoming ever more possible within the education system of the Republic of Ireland.

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SECTION FIVE

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION FIVE: THE RELIGIOUS, MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DIMENSION IN EDUCATION: PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Marian de Souza

Australian Catholic University, Ballarat, Australia

The end of the twentieth century saw a trend in education that had significant implications for the development of teaching and learning environments and programs. While there was some recognition that the design of learning spaces were a contributory factor in promoting effective learning, for the most part, the intentional focus was to promote knowledge and skills in particular areas. One example of this was the introduction of interventionist literacy and numeracy programs at primary levels where cognitive learning was given precedence in learning and teaching. Correspondingly, many educational authorities incorporated an outcomes-based curriculum model as the framework in which learning programs were developed and operated, and learning outcomes were articulated in relation to the knowledge and skills that students would display/demonstrate at the end of a program or unit of work.

As well, in many parts of the Western world, there has been an increasing emphasis on accountability in education with one result being the introduction of formal assessment procedures at most year levels across primary and secondary classrooms. Arguably, this has had some impact on teaching and learning in many classrooms where teachers, inevitably, have succumbed to the associated pressures of external directives regarding assessment and, accordingly, have shaped their programs to meet these requirements. Some of these tendencies have crept into religious education classrooms, where, in many instances, focus has been given to the cognitive domain, partly because this reflects the approach to learning in the wider curriculum where the outcomes in knowledge and skills are assessable, and partly because, in some views, this has the possibility of raising the credibility of the subject. The nebulous elements of the affective and spiritual domains tend to provide certain difficulties in terms of measurement and assessment so that they

have, too often, been neglected or overlooked. Consequently, learning environments and programs have often failed to address and nurture the growth and development of the whole person. In particular, the students' inner lives have often been neglected, and the corresponding expressions of these inner lives such as contemplation, creativity and imagination have too often been glossed over in crowded curricula. Instead, exercises in reason, logic and the gaining of practical skills to improve the performance of the outer persona of the individual have been given priority.

Within this context, there have been certain moves towards a more holistic approach to learning and teaching where the personal, social, moral and spiritual dimensions of learning are addressed alongside the intellectual. New theories of intelligence, in particular Gardner's MI Theory (1983; 1993), and approaches involving the use of teaching strategies that recognised individual differences and different learning styles have been influential factors in determining changes in classroom practice in the past few decades. However, the ongoing review and restructuring of curriculum frameworks clearly suggest that certain inadequacies and problems keep re-surfacing. The attention that has been directed to the acquisition of knowledge and skills to prepare students to become active players in a market society which is located in a global economy does not always appear to promote effective learning for all students. It would seem that new perspectives need to be developed and innovative approaches and strategies need to be introduced which will enhance teaching and learning practices for all members of education communities, teachers and learners alike. This, then, is the precise aim of the chapters contained in this section. They seek to offer ideas and arguments based on scholarship and research which will address the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions in education, and which will complement the rational and knowledge-based aspects of learning programs, thereby promoting a more holistic approach to learning and teaching.

The chapters in this section, then, are divided into three parts. The first focuses on the theoretical underpinnings that provide the structure for curriculum offerings that address these three dimensions. As well, there is recognition of the changing social, political and environmental contexts that have implications for education. In a world optimistically or euphemistically called a global village, there has been unparalleled growth of multicultural, multi-faith and multi-linguistic societies in countries that, once, used to be mono-cultural and mono-religious and, for the most part, mono-linguistic. This has had some impact on the political, social and religious characteristics of these societies and it requires education for understanding and tolerance of, respect for and empathy with groups of people who are different. More importantly, there is some acknowledgement that professional development and training should be offered to educators who, themselves, may find their exposure to the newcomers in their communities quite confronting if they have previously had little understanding or experience of the nature of multiculturalism. Other contemporary characteristics that trigger concern and require some response through educational programs is the need to inform and prepare students to live in a world

under threat from global terrorism and/or environmental disaster. These are some of the issues that are raised and discussed in terms of their implications for learning and teaching.

In the first chapter, Adrian Gellert considers the benefits of a religious education program which draws on the rich heritage of the Judeo-Christian tradition to define a teaching approach which will address and nurture the individuality of each student and contribute to their formative processes. Further, he acknowledges that religious education cannot exist in a vacuum but must be placed within an educational and instructional scientific framework in order to develop a credible pedagogy. Finally, he proposes such a pedagogical structure and reports on research that examined its effectiveness as a useful and valid approach to teaching religious education in secondary schools in Malta.

Given some of the differences in the respective religious cultures of Malta and Canada, the first being predominantly Catholic and the second being multi-faith, Daniel Scott devotes his chapter to exploring the interface of religion and spirituality in the lives of Canadian young people. He highlights a symptom common to young people in many other Western cultures where they perceive themselves as a spiritual people but not religious, and suggests that the perceptions of these young people are, clearly, a reflection of their time and culture. Scott goes on to argue that the context or culture has significance for the development of a spiritual identity of young people through expressions of belonging, resistance, participation, believing and choosing and this can occur both within and without a religious tradition. He identifies young people's experience of voice, vocation and vision as elements in their search for belonging. Some implications ensuing from Scott's study are the need for education communities to provide space for the development of voice, honouring of vision and vocation and respecting the spiritual journey of all young people whether this is developed within or outside a religious tradition.

My own chapter examines the current situation in Australia which aims to re-introduce Values Education into the curriculum. I argue that this is problematic in a pluralist society where values are relative things. Instead, I present a curriculum model that addresses the spiritual dimension of learning which draws on rational, emotional and spiritual intelligence theories and recognises corresponding elements in the learning process, namely, perceiving/sensing, thinking, feeling and inner reflecting or intuiting. Following this, I offer a description of how this process may work and how it, potentially, can promote a sense of self, place, meaning and purpose amongst students. Ultimately, such a model may provide a framework within which a successful values education approach can be developed.

A most relevant, yet different perspective is presented by Mualla Selcuk from Turkey in her chapter which discusses the issues of pluralism in today's world and the corresponding necessity and challenge of teaching the message contained in the Qur'an about equality, mutual respect and solidarity in today's world. This is a timely and insightful discussion in today's world where religious intolerance has permeated many communities with unhappy results. Selcuk's message is drawn from the Qur'an. She argues that all humans are created from one and the same

source and refers to the different qualities that all individuals have which allow them to contribute to the enrichment of humanity. Accordingly, Selcuk offers a way of teaching which will promote equality, hope and meaning in a divided world.

In the following chapter, Tobin Hart reflects on an aspect that is mirrored frequently throughout this text when he refers to the spiritual aspects of education as different to a religious curriculum. He clearly points to the quality of the experience which makes it a spiritual encounter whether this happens within a religious or other classroom. Generally, Hart has focused on young children in the United States whose spirituality, he claims, can exist as something quite distinct from adult concepts and knowledge of religion. He argues that teaching to the depth of the subject and Self raises questions about the inner life and capacities of the student – which could allow access to a spiritual consciousness. Hart, then proposes addressing six layers in an integrative pedagogy of depth that allows the subject and the Self to be drawn out, leading to outcomes where the heart of understanding is cultivated through empathy, appreciation, openness, accommodation, service, listening and loving presence. As Hart suggests, the combination of this kind of understanding with intellectual thinking which critiques, questions and looks for evidence is a powerful combination in the educative process ultimately leading to transformation.

Tony Eaude is a writer from Britain and his subject is another valuable and current topic: the implication of gender and related issues for teaching to promote spiritual development. His contention is that an understanding of spiritual development will be enhanced if it is considered in light of gender. Further, Eaude argues for intervention in learning programs during the formative years of childhood which will enable certain desirable values to be passed on thereby contributing to personality formation and holistic development.

In the next chapter, Brendan Hyde discusses a qualitative research approach, hermeneutic phenomenology, which he used in a research study to identify characteristics of children's spirituality. Hyde presents some of the hermeneutic phenomenological writing and his own reflections and interpretations, moving through van Manen's framework of lifeworld existentials, which led to the identification of one of the characteristics which he named *the felt sense*. Linking the *felt sense* to Csikszentmihalyi's notion of *flow* and Gendlin's notion of *focusing*, Hyde discusses various activities in which the students were engaged where they encountered a sense of relatedness and connectedness to Self, to Other in terms of their peers, to Other in terms of the activity in which each was engaged, and potentially at least, to a Transcendent Other. Following this, Hyde proposes a pedagogical framework for the nurturing of children's spirituality in the primary religious education classroom in Australian Catholic schools. In this approach, Hyde locates the activity of religious education within the greater ambit of spirituality by drawing upon the spiritual dimension of learning as the starting point before moving to the affective and cognitive domains.

Yet, another perspective in religious education is offered by Sandy Carroll. She focuses on the topic: Mary in the Catholic Tradition. In this chapter, Carroll explores

the theological and educational perspectives that provide the foundational base for learning and teaching about Mary and highlights the significance of scriptural and historical sources. Carroll then examines the role of social analysis which includes an awareness of the social location of both educators and students which should underpin teaching about Mary in any religious education context. She then goes on to explore the dynamic relationship between the development of doctrine and liturgical celebration and investigates the concept of Marian Apparitions as private revelation. Ultimately, Carroll argues that Mary should be portrayed as a person in solidarity with humanity who has relevance for and who offers a sign of hope in contemporary times.

Following this, Vivienne Mountain presents a sound case for teaching children about prayer and how to pray. She draws on her own research to argue that, for the children who participated in her study, prayer was perceived to be a valued aspect of life with many of the children having personal experiences of prayer within a community of faith. Mountain identifies prayer as an expression of spirituality and discusses the role of prayer in helping children to cope and to make meaning from their experiences. As well, it offers a reflective space and can create a sense of identity and social comfort of shared belief, celebration and ritual. Given these understandings, Mountain argues that professionals concerned with student welfare and religious education should be aware of and appreciate that prayer should play a significant role in their professional practice.

This brings us to the end of the first part in the pedagogical section. The second part contains writings that explore the use of the arts to promote the religious, moral and spiritual dimension in learning and teaching. Using an arts approach to teach a topic can raise the potential of promoting connections with the students since it can arouse in the learner different thoughts and feelings which are triggered by their different life experiences and which may illuminate their perceptions of the familiar, or transform their vision of the world. Such an approach can create a sense of mystery, magic and wonder, and possibly a glimpse of something beyond. It may also promote a connection between students as they respond individually and collectively to the content of the lesson, which can lead to a deeper engagement with and understanding of the particular topic. Unfortunately, the arts are one of the discipline areas that are undervalued since the benefits they offer are often intangible and do not, obviously, lead to explicit material gain. However, when attempting to address the emotional and spiritual dimensions of education, the arts provide an invaluable source and medium. They are an expression of the inner Self/spirit and they provoke a response from the inner Self/spirit of the receiver, hence, they may be viewed as the unconscious language of the inner Self/spirit of humanity. These are some of the ideas that are explored in the following chapters.

To begin with, Ann Trousdale's examines the history of children's literature and its long association with religious and spiritual concepts and highlights its role in promoting children's spiritual growth. In particular, she explores the value and appropriateness of narrative pedagogy by discussing the findings of various research studies that have attempted to investigate the nature and appeal of story

and, also, how children respond to story. Trousdale then proceeds to offer a number of insightful and useful commentaries on a variety of children's books that deal with spiritual matters and highlights their potential as useful resources for classroom programs.

Peta Goldberg's contribution concentrates on the use of the creative arts in religious education. She alludes to the fact that most religious traditions hand on their heritage not just through their sacred scriptures, history, institutional culture and ethical practice but also through their rites, poetry, architecture, music, paintings and sculptures. Thus, Goldberg argues that the arts are a concrete manifestation of religion as it is lived, imagined and experienced by its adherents. She then provides a well argued theoretical perspective which lays the foundation for a Critically Engaging Creative Arts Approach to the teaching of religious education which will engage students in a creative and interesting way to dialogue with content and text.

The subsequent chapter by Rose Duffy presents the findings of a study with middle secondary Catholic school students in Australia that investigated their images of God. Duffy discusses the implications of her findings for educational programs that address the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents from the point of view of a Catholic religious educator that assumes that education for spirituality and religious understanding is, potentially, a positive part of educating the whole child. She reports that, in general, most participants in her study had positive images of God which were consistent with the central images of Christianity. As well, she found that some images were evidence of a privatised and secularised belief and, in those instances, they corresponded to the thinking and religious practice of those participants. A further significant finding was that many perceived that their experiences of the natural world heightened their sense of and encounter with their God. Certainly, Duffy's study has relevance for Christian educators who are attempting to introduce a transcendent dimension into the lives of their students.

The fourth chapter that focuses on the arts comes from Ross Keating who draws on Neil Postman's work to provide a framework for an exploration of Merton's poetry as a medium for teaching Values Education. Keating echoes Trousdale's writings when he declares that narrative is an important ingredient in learning programs and suggests that all narratives have a common underlying theme, which is the idea of unity within diversity. He argues that in Merton's view, people are like sapiential poetry since both proceed from the same source and are formed through an act of re-creative perception of what lies at the core of reality. He concludes by affirming that to achieve a full creative Christian adult life there must be a movement of the self-conscious individual into the expansive consciousness of a person who is a 'free and creative source of a gift of love and meaning' and that such a movement can be facilitated through the use of Wisdom Poetry.

The third and final part of the pedagogical section presents a range of writings from academics mostly involved in teacher education. The value of these final chapters lies in their capacity to transfer theory into practice so that they contain a variety of approaches and strategies that can be used in classroom programs which

attempt to address the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions in learning and teaching.

The first chapter in this group is offered by Cathy Ota and Lucia Berdoncini and it reports on an investigation located in the UK into the use of groupwork skills to foster spiritual, moral and social growth among young children. There was a focus on offering teaching strategies that encouraged holistic growth and development of students by building trusting relationships between themselves and their teachers, and by enhancing social skills through the process of groupwork. The writers present a comprehensive overview of understandings that have emerged in relation to children's spiritual, moral and social growth. In this respect, growth and development does not reflect a linear movement from nothingness to an endpoint. Rather, it is perceived as a movement towards increased complexity which allows an acknowledgement of the worldviews children bring into the classroom, that is, their experiences, narrative and meaning making. In the end, the writers claim that this approach promotes the education of the whole child since it, potentially, encourages children to accept responsibility for their own learning and also to learn from their relational experiences.

The following chapter is placed in the context of South Africa where, in the past several years, religious education has had to acknowledge and emphasise the diversity of beliefs and religions that are evident in school communities. Cornelia Roux presents a well-informed discussion of the political and social contexts and their impact on learning programs in religious education. She describes a reflective-dialogical approach that she has used with her students which aims at promoting knowledge and understanding of different religions. The main learning strategy in this approach is the use of games and Roux offers an insightful discussion about the psychological, social emotional and cognitive aspects of using games to promote learning. Drawing on her experiences with her students, Roux unreservedly asserts that this approach has the potential to develop in students a respect and knowledge of people of different worldviews, irrespective of their own cultural and religious backgrounds. Certainly, this aspect is likely to make the approach a worthwhile offering to educators in multi-faith and multicultural communities.

The theme of teaching in multi-faith communities is continued in the next chapter where Jane Erricker provides a comprehensive background of religious education which has been mandatory for all primary and secondary schools in the multi-faith British context. She makes the point that, over the past several years, the term 'spiritual development' has appeared in curriculum documents which are not confined to religious education. Instead, all subjects have been required to address spirituality. Erricker contends that spiritual education needs to be taken seriously because it has the potential to radically reshape our educational vision and practice and she describes some teaching strategies that evolved from the Children and Worldview project in the UK which aim at promoting spiritual development amongst children but which are not necessarily part of a religious education program. In general, these strategies aim to facilitate children reflecting on their lives which can help them to know themselves and to determine how they feel about the issues that

they face in their individual worlds. Thus, Erricker argues that children need to be given time, space and permission to do this as it allows them to develop spiritually, morally and emotionally.

Another view on teacher education comes from a study, this time from Portugal, which aimed at promoting an understanding of human development and spiritual education. Maria da Conceição Azevedo and Helena Gil da Costa discuss a variety of concepts which provide the structural framework for their teaching approach such as education, spirituality, creativity and human development and follow this by proposing a series of useful and creative strategies which they have trialled and which flow out of their theoretical perspective. They then offer the positive findings from the evaluation they made of their study and make a valid and important point that since teacher education is about preparing people to develop their skills as facilitators of the development of others, teacher trainees need to face the challenge of their own spiritual education.

Mary Nuttall, in the next chapter, expounds the value of soulful education and links it to current theories on curriculum development and intelligences. She discusses the positive findings from her own research in relation to learning amongst Australian primary school children, student teachers and classroom practitioners which lead her to propose that, in each of these contexts, soulful learning experiences should be an essential and planned-for component of learning programs.

Sally Liddy takes us back into the field of religious education where she presents a discourse on the Catholic Christian perspective on teaching sacred texts. Liddy offers a concise and informed discussion on understanding and interpreting the Bible within the faith tradition and, subsequently, presents an array of strategies and resources that have proved valuable and useful for the classroom practitioner.

In the final chapter for this section, Sue Phillips outlines and describes an innovative approach to teaching religion in the multi-faith and multicultural contexts of British schools which she calls the Theatre of Learning. Phillip's main contention is that if religious education is to be a successful venture, it needs to make sense to the student in the context of their everyday lives. She draws on her experiences in secondary classrooms to suggest that the strategies she uses to motivate and engage her students lead to an improvement in their academic performance because their focus on teaching and learning is about the whole person teaching the whole child. Phillips asserts that this approach develops the spirituality of both teacher and learner thereby increasing the satisfaction of teaching and learning for both teachers and students. She describes the six techniques that she uses and offers a sound rationale for their inclusion in this approach. Ultimately, Phillips suggest that the teaching and learning experiences that have emerged from this approach point to the fact that spirituality is innate and that it needs to be nurtured and given expression since many students are searching for this aspect in their lives.

In general, then, the writers in this section have demonstrated the importance of addressing the religious, moral and spiritual dimensions in education, particularly in contemporary times where cultural and religious divisions, including religious extremism with its offshoot, terrorism, are characteristic features. They

have presented theoretical perspectives and a variety of learning contexts and practices that have been carefully researched and developed and, in many cases, trialled to successful outcomes. It is to be hoped that the ideas and recommendations offered here will be a valuable and challenging resource to educators and scholars.

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ADAPTING TO THE REQUIRMENTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE R.E. CLASSROOM

Dr. Adrian Gellel

Catechetics and Religious Education, University of Malta

Introduction

While this chapter is being written, Spain is experiencing a raging controversy over the role and importance Religious Education should have in State funded schools. After making Religious Education optional, the Spanish government is now proposing to exclude the subject from the scholastic grading system. The proposed law is being opposed by the Catholic Parents Association, the Catholic Church and the conservative Popular Party.

The change occurring in Spain is not an isolated case. This last decade has witnessed a number of changes in the model, content and role of Religious Education in various Western countries, mainly on the old continent. The reasons behind this scenario are different. In the first place, acceptance of Religion is changing. For instance, Thomas (1997) reports that, while in the beginning of the 20th century declared atheists and those not adhering to a religion were only 0.2%, by the mid-90s this percentage rose to 18.5%. On a similar note, trust in religious institutions in the European Union dropped from 50% in Spring 2001 to 41% in Spring 2004 (European Commission, 2001; European Commission, 2004). Church attendance is in decline in most countries in the Western world with figures as low as 5% in France, and 4% in both Britain and Denmark, while, in less than a decade, the Swiss church has experienced a decline of 18% of the congregation's monthly attendance (Inglehart and Baker 2000, Norris and Inglehart, 2004).

Secondly, the post 9/11 world has become more conscious and, maybe, more afraid of diversity. Thus we notice that policy-makers and researchers in the area have pushed the issues of pluralism, tolerance and social cohesion to the top of the agenda. While state curricula are increasingly expressing the need for spiritual and moral formation there is also an increasing concern for the utilitarian need of a knowledge that helps one understand the other. A clear case in point is the

number of conferences, promoted by the European Council's High Commissioner of Human Rights, aiming at providing students with 'objective' knowledge about different religions.

With this crisis setting as a backdrop, is it still legitimate to continue to insist on the need for research for a pedagogical approach rather than to focus on the place and contribution of Religious Education in the school? Since the identity of Religious Education is at stake, one can understand that debate should centre round its beneficial contribution to the formative process of young people in schools. Yet, if no real dialogue with the educational sciences is initiated, the subject risks irreversibly entering a ghetto reserved for irrelevant scholastic optional choices. Research in the fields of instructional science and the affective dimension can assist scholars in identifying the specificity of Religious Education. This would then allow further research into how such a school subject impacts on the individual's formation process and how it contributes to the well-being of society-at-large. Religious Education needs to be understood as being intrinsically an interdisciplinary field, bringing together, mainly, its own field of expertise, the wisdom of traditions, and the knowledge of Educational Science. To be credible, Religious Education must interact with, the scientific currency of similar scholastic disciplines.

In this chapter I intend to discuss and propose a methodology that draws from the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, Educational Psychology, and Instructional Design. In the face of the awareness of cultural and psychological plurality present in schools, it appears urgent to propose means by which diversity may be respected. Whilst multi-culturalism is being extensively treated in Religious Education, the area of Individual Differences seems to be lagging behind. Religious Educators are aware of the individual diversity, but, as far as it can be ascertained, there has never been a scientific endeavour to meet these differences in the classroom and to promote better learning through the personal construction of meaning.

It is my belief that through this proposal, Religious Education would not only benefit from the knowledge of educational sciences and thus gain more standing in the educational arena, but it would also be better equipped to be more faithful to both the content it proposes and to the individual student. Consequently, better results could be obtained. To achieve this goal, I intend to

- 1) investigate Judeo-Christian Scriptures in order to find a framework that is respectful of every individual person in the learning process,
- 2) delve in the area of Adaptive Education and see whether it is possible to meet these differences in the classroom, and
- 3) propose Adaptive Religious Education as a means of meeting individual requirements in the Religious Education classroom.

Drawing from the Judeo Christian Scriptures

Before entering into a dialogue with educational sciences, it is opportune to examine whether there is sufficient philosophical and theological support to the proposal of

a method of imparting religious education that is sensitive to the requirements of the individual learner.

The rich Judeo-Christian tradition has the necessary tools to dialogue with contemporary disciplines. Rooted in millennial experience of different generations, the Judeo-Christian tradition is capable of pointing to what is essential and of proposing a solid understanding of who the human person is, what is the Good Life, what constitutes authentic relationships and, consequently, a particular understanding of pedagogy.

The memory of the believing community is to be found in Sacred Scriptures, Traditions, and Doctrine. It is the reflection of basic human experiences in the light of God's dealing with the community. It is in everyday life that humans experience God's Love. For the purpose of this study, any reflection on God's respect for the individual has to be made on the basis of past and present experience of the believing community.

The Pedagogy of God

The Israelite understanding of the relationship of God with the community, and eventually with every individual, was a progressive one. From their experience, one can read God's respect for their different historical stages and His different ways of dealing with the condition of different human groups and individuals. Their belief in a God who is always with them was the major key that enabled them to perceive the possibility of an intimate relationship with God, a relationship experienced and experimented, particularly in the lives of the patriarchs and the prophets. It is mainly in these, community-read, individual experiences that one can infer the respect that God has for the person and the adaptive pedagogy that God chooses to practice.

In the history of Israel, God reveals Himself as the pedagogue not only of the community but also of the individual. In the call and in the relationship that is thereafter established, one can understand the intimacy of these relationships and the different ways God deals with every individual. The different ways in which the call of individual prophets has been recorded testifies to the call coming to each prophet in an individual way conditioned by one's particular personality. The writing prophets report that they received their call personally and directly from God. From the accounts one learns that no particular previous faith convictions or religious experiences are necessary for a person to stand before Yahweh (Sicre, 1995). While Jeremiah seems to have been immersed in a profound religious experience from a very young age (Jr 1, 4–6), Amos was a shepherd belonging to no particular community of prophets when God called him to prophecy (Am 7:14–15), and Isaiah is aware of his sinfulness when the call is addressed to him (Is 6:5).

It must be emphasised that the prophets described in the Scriptures are just shadows of the historical prophets. Scriptures are the reflected-upon experiences of the historical prophet or his secretary (as in the case of Jeremiah) or his community, and the interpretations of later communities which have re-read the text according to

the needs of their time (Barton, 1986). Nonetheless one can still infer the theology of relationship that was conceptualised and practised by prophets and their community.

Because of their 'Yes', prophets came to know God in a different way. They did not develop a theory of God but they proclaimed a God whom they had personally experienced and who was present in their lives and the life of the community (Heschel, 1981) and because of their intimate relationship with God, they were granted the power to intercede and argue with God on behalf of their community, (cf. Gn 18:16–33; cf. Is 37:1–7; cf. Jr 15:11b).

It is exactly in this intimate relationship that the prophet experienced something that was totally new to Israel; he attained a new consciousness because he was in the presence of Yahweh. However, as Wolff (1987) notes, it is also because of this new consciousness that they experienced isolation and ridicule by the community. Their consolation remained in Yahweh who continuously promised them that He would remain by their side (cf. Jr 15:21). The God, who has facilitated the discovery of true Self, educates in a process of the life journey through the intimate relationship that is established. The ultimate *aretē* of this pedagogy is to be formed into a new being, with a new heart modelled on the heart and mind of God.

The Pedagogy of Christ

It is evident that in the New Testament there is more attention to the faith experience of the individual. It is only in a relationship of faith and trust that the called one can become a new person. The Gospel according to Mark points out that even though discipleship and individual faith in Jesus are distinct they are, in fact, bound together.

The call is the activity and prerogative of the God of Life who calls every individual to a relationship that restores life in all its dimensions (physical, mental, social and spiritual), such as, for instance, Jesus' encounter with the woman suffering from haemorrhage (Lk 8:42–48). All words and actions (miracles) are intended to summon the individual to a new life and actually bring new life, in all its fullness, especially to those who need it, sinners, the sick, the socially marginalised, and even the dead.

In Jesus, God's personalised pedagogy is expressed in its fullness. Jesus is presented as the teacher whose teaching addresses individual needs according to one's stage in the journey towards total belief in him. Thus his message is suited to his audience (crowds, disciples, twelve, small group or individuals). However, the gospels also make the readers aware that all Jesus' actions and words are pregnant with didactic meaning. Jesus does not address solely the masses but he addresses every individual he encounters and he adapts his pedagogy accordingly. Nicodemus, the Samaritan, the blind man, Levi, the tax collector, the rich young man, and Jairus are all perfect examples of Jesus' attention to the individual and his ability to adapt to different personal needs.

However, one should also consider that God's personalised pedagogy occurs in the context of the community. The theology of equilibrium between individual and

community is once again reiterated even if through a different perspective. Whilst in the Hebrew Scriptures more attention was given to the salvation of the community, in the New Testament more attention is given to the salvation of the individual. Nonetheless, in both periods there is the belief that there is no community without the individual and vice versa.

In the New Testament, society had developed a more personalised concept of what is meant by community. The meaning of community in the New Testament is markedly different from that of the Hebrew Scriptures. One notes that through the different periods (Ancient Israel, the Monarchy period, the exilic period, the post exilic period and the New Testament period) there is progression in the mentality of the believing community in its recognition of the individual as an important agent within the community. God respects this progression by adapting his revelation accordingly and by making his call more personal. From a pedagogical point of view one can infer that God respects the individual in his/her fullness through the positive human model found in the person of Christ. In the New Testament, God, through the person of Jesus Christ, personalises his call and adapts to the needs and characteristic of every individual by first addressing the individual, and thus demanding personal commitment, then by walking alongside the individual in his/her faith journey and, thereafter, by restoring and giving him/her Life.

Dialoguing with the Educational Sciences

Having seen God's respect for the individual in his chosen pedagogy, we shall examine how the educational sciences have been dealing with the issue of individual differences within the educational set up.

Every educator has been, and will be confronted with the problem, or rather, the challenge of individual differences. Confucius and Yeu-Zheg in the Eastern World (Corno & Snow, 1986) and Socrates, Isocrates and especially Quintilian in the Western World (Snow, 1982; Talbert & Cronbach, 2002) are only a few representatives of the ancient's world familiarity with individual differences and the will to adapt to such differences. However, attempts at adapting teaching to individual differences remained sporadic and mostly based on the educator's professional insights. It was only in the past hundred years that a more serious and a more scientific approach to the challenges offered by individual differences has been taken.

The first answer of the educational system was to eliminate those students who could not cope. In response, Dewey deplored the fixed school curricula that did not cater for the needs of all individuals in the classroom (Glaser, 1977). This, together with the new understanding of individual differences, impelled policy makers to seriously think of ways to address differences in the classroom. Various ways have been tried; for instance, Streaming, Banding and Setting.

In theory, homogenised groups assist teachers to give more attention to the needs of gifted and academically poor students. However, various educationalists contend otherwise. For instance, Boaler, William and Brown (2000) studied the effect of the use of Setting in six British schools. The authors found that not only were students

in the low sets disadvantaged but also students in the top ability setting reported dissatisfaction since, often, their abilities were overestimated and teachers expected higher levels. One of the major problems the authors found was that, in Setting, teachers assumed that students were identical in ability and level and used a single pedagogical approach that did not give adequate attention to students' individual differences.

Whilst educators and policy makers have become more sensitive to the requirements of individuals, correlational psychology has developed and explored new individual difference constructs. Concurrently experimental psychology has exploring the best 'treatments' that can be given in order for learners to achieve more. The separation between the two disciplines has become wider, with Cronbach (1957) lamenting that doctoral students specialised in one area without having much knowledge of the other discipline. In his presidential address to the American Psychology Association, Cronbach (1957) advanced the idea that more could be achieved from the synergy of the two disciplines. It was then that he coined the term Aptitude-Treatment Interaction, later compressed into ATI. Through ATI, Cronbach wanted a discipline that was aware of human differences and could predict the outcome according to the various learning treatments administered.

Cronbach's proposal was soon taken on board by a number of researchers, however, the enthusiasm for the idea evidenced in the literature of the 1960s and 1970s had fizzled out by the 1980s. The reason for this decline may be attributed mainly to three major factors. In the first instance, few gave attention to the need of a theoretical framework that could support the methodology of such an enormous task. A second problem was posed by the innumerable models and instruments in the field of individual differences. Worst of all, there was no single agreement on what constitutes a construct and therefore how to measure it. Consequently, the third factor became the most detrimental. The doctoral dissertation of Bracht in 1969, an unpublished report by Cronbach and Snow during the same year and an extensive study published by Cronbach and Snow (1977) showed how a number of research projects failed to find significant ATIs. Since research yielded no sure results, few continued to investigate the theory.

Dick Snow may be considered one of the few researchers who stubbornly continued to believe in the promise of ATI. However, instead of working on experimentation he invested more energy in building a strong theoretical framework that could help understand aptitudes, their relationships amongst each other and their interaction with the situation, which he also strived to define better.

Although Cronbach and Snow (1977) concluded that 'no Aptitude x Treatment interactions are so well confirmed that they can be used directly as guides to instruction' (p. 492), they also insisted that ATIs do exist and that these are ubiquitous in educational settings. Because of this belief, they put forward more than thirty practical methodological recommendations for future research since they concluded that most of the research methods adopted to date were inadequate and, consequently, produced misleading results. Unfortunately, very few researchers took heed of these recommendations.

Cronbach and Snow believed that ATI research failed because of wrongly put questions and because of the innumerable variables one finds in a normal class setting, a considerable number of which cannot be controlled. Snow worked on a clearer definition of the term aptitude, a term which, if correctly defined would help many young people to develop their potentials and be well equipped to succeed in education (Snow, 2002).

There seem to be two competing definitions of the term aptitude. On the one hand a wide understanding that includes readiness and suitability and on the other, there has been a tendency to narrow the meaning and equate aptitude to intelligence. From the very beginning of the twentieth century, education systems tied the concept of student aptitude with intelligence. The relationship between education and intelligence is so strong that Mayer (2000) holds that ‘quite literally, intelligence is the child of education’ (p. 519). This assertion is made in the belief that the study of intelligence was born to service education and that education has contributed a lot in shaping and informing theories and models of intelligence.

Intelligence has traditionally been the individual difference construct most studied. Yet, it should be also noted that, up till now, there is no single agreed upon theory, nor do psychologists agree on the importance of different models of intelligence. Table 1 explicates the different models proposed by researchers in an attempt to categorise theories.

By tying aptitude with intelligence, researchers have restricted the definition of aptitude and, consequently, they have a very limited understanding of what influences learning. The problem with research in the area of individual differences is that it is too fragmented and compartmentalised. Indeed, intelligence is only one example of the many constructs. However, researchers very often study one construct without reference to others and as a result we are still far from having

Table 1. Different Models of Intelligence

Davidson & Downing (2000)	Daniel (2000)	Jonassen & Grabowski (1993)	Neisser et al. (1996)	Sternberg (2003)
Neural Hierarchical	Hierarchical Neuro-psychological	Complexity Psychometric	Psychometric Multiple forms of Intelligence	Psychometric Cognitive structures
Complex		Information Processing Models	Cultural Variation	Information Processing
Contextual			Developmental Progression Biological	Biological Cultural System Models

a global picture of the individual person, that is, how different constructs interact with each other in order for a person to learn.

The problem with research on individual difference lies mainly in the understanding of who the human person is and how the human person learns. Our every day life experience suggests that humans are complex and unique beings. Their thoughts and actions are not the result of compartmentalised processes but the result of synergies in human characteristics and the environment they are in.

On more than one occasion, Snow called for the need to find a new language of aptitude that would deal comprehensively with human individual characteristics in the learning process (cf. Snow, 1991; cf. Snow, 1992). Through his research Snow came to understand aptitude as all that predicts learning, which implies that 'all possible individual differences even remotely related to learning need to be considered' (Snow, 1992, p. 9). His understanding of aptitude was such that he did not consider aptitude to be an 'in the head property' but a result of the complex interaction between the individual and the situation (Snow, 1980). (Snow, 1992) insisted that 'human beings are not lists of independent variables, they are coordinated wholes' (p.10). This intuition, together with the understanding that the whole is more than the summation of its parts (Ackerman, 2003), is congruent with the Judeo-Christian holistic comprehension of the human person.

Snow (1992) defended this broad conceptualisation of aptitude on the grounds that,

- i) to think of it otherwise would be narrowing human potential;
- ii) as a research strategy, aptitude should be wide enough not to miss any aspect that is propaedeutic to learning; and that
- iii) for theoretical purposes, it is the combination of individual differences that needs to be understood in conjunction with the concrete situations the person is in.

Accepting a broad definition of the word 'aptitude' implies that cognitive abilities are not enough to explain one's readiness for learning. Indeed other factors, namely, those in the affective and conative dimensions, need to be taken into consideration. Up till now there has been little work pointing to the unity of these domains and there have rarely been studies that take a holistic point of view. One possible explanation is that, up till now there is no clear understanding how these domains work together. Snow, Corno & Jackson (1996) took up the challenge by providing a provisional taxonomy of individual differences that included characteristics from the Cognitive, Conative and Affective dimensions. Although they did not claim to have proposed a comprehensive model of reality, the authors give ample evidence how individual constructs in the affective and conative domains, such as anxiety, beliefs, styles and emotions affect learning. Whilst acknowledging that more work needs to be done, they insist that 'it is important not to adopt one particular view to the exclusion of others, lest important phenomena or methods of studying them be left out' (p. 246).

Snow (1991) defined his theory of aptitude after borrowing and building upon the ideas of Simon (1969), Gibson (1979) and Cronbach. Snow understood that the

person has a number of propensities, in the same manner that the situation provides affordances. Aptitude occurs when there is attunement between the propensities of the individual and the affordances of the situation. Thus a person may benefit from the affordances of a particular situation but not benefit from similar affordances in a different situation. For Snow (1992), this means that in education, particular instructional treatments may benefit some students by offering affordances that can be attuned to their propensities.

Hence in the same manner that the person has an array of propensities, any situation presents a range of stimulus components that may or may not be new to the student's learning history. These stimulus components may represent a challenge, a demand or present opportunities. However they may also replace the need for certain propensities on the student's part.

It should be pointed out that just as the individual is transformed by the situation, the individual also contributes to the constitution of the situation s/he is in. Furthermore, the propensities of a group of persons act as affordances for each other. Nonetheless, whilst implying it, Snow never really put emphasis on the social dimension of the situation.

The holistic vision of the human person together with a wide conceptualisation of 'aptitude', logically leads to the view that whilst

...isolated traits have significant and sometimes substantial impact in learning outcomes, it may be that combination of traits have more predictive power than traits in isolation. Moreover, the combination of traits...may provide a more substantial; explanatory power for understanding how individual characteristics come together to yield different styles of learning and different levels of educational outcomes (Ackerman, 2003, p. 92).

Thus, in the early sixties Snow proposed the concept of aptitude complexes aimed at studying propensities which act together, defined as 'categories of whole persons, not lists of interacting variables' (Snow, 1992, pp. 15–16). The implication of these aptitude complexes is that there is more than just summation in the process of combination of aptitudes. In three difference studies, Ackerman and his colleagues (Rolfus & Ackerman 1999; Ackerman 2000; Ackerman, Bowen, Beier & Kanfer 2001) were able to find at least three aptitude complexes with cross-domain batteries of personality, self-concept, interest and motivation trait measures. However, as Ackerman (2003) notes, while there is much potential in an area that brings together the Kantian triad of cognitive, affective and conative, the empirical basis for such work is still at its infancy.

Towards a Theory of Adaptive Religious Education

There are many points of convergence between the Judeo Christian tradition and the modern educational sciences. Just as Israel and the early Christian Community experienced God's will to establish an adaptive pedagogical relationship with the

individual and his/her community, so the modern educational sciences are striving to achieve means to meet the requirements of the individual in educational settings. Similarly, there are also various insights that can be shared to enrich each other. For instance, the Judeo-Christian tradition has much to offer with respect to a holistic understanding of a human person, a vision which is much needed by a science that is so wounded by fragmentation. On the other hand, the educational sciences can offer concrete methodologies for dealing with particular differences.

However, although there are many points that encourage dialogue, one should not be misled into thinking that there are no differences. Although the aims of adaptation in a Religious Education context and that of ATI may sound similar, since both aim at optimising students' potentials, they are grounded in different philosophies. An immediate difference lies in the fact that ATI and all other educational methods dealing with individual differences aim at guaranteeing to every individual the opportunity to run his/her strongest race in a society where equality is emphasised (cf. United States of America, House of Representatives, 2002). However, although seeking to optimise every student's potential, an Adaptive Religious Education moves a step further. This pedagogy is rooted in the meaning of person that is seen to transcend everyday living and therefore its aims are not just utilitarian. A simple formulation of this philosophy would be 'to make the human person more human', which in Christian terms means 'to make the human person more close to the image of God, that is, more close to the intended plan which God has for every individual.'

The concept of adaptation to individual differences is not new in the circles of the believing community. As Slavin (1936) notes, the problem of individual difference and its effects on education was treated by various Christian authors including, Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, Abelard, Bonaventure, Albert the Great, Aquinas, Scotus and Occam. Similarly, in recent years, various documents of the Catholic Church point to the need to adapt to the requirements of the learner, (cf. *Congregazione per il Clero*, 1997; cf. Paul VI, 1975) but, as far as can be ascertained, there has not been a systematic and scientific agenda aimed at promoting a Religious Education that truly meets the requirements of the individual by adapting to his/her aptitudes, as is here suggested.

Even though education and psychology may be said to have grown apart (Glaser, 1977), there are many examples where the two disciplines have come together and produced a unique language in favour of a theory and practice in the area of learning and instruction. Furthermore, one should recall that at the end of the nineteenth century Dewey (1900) conceptualised them as forming a synergy.

And this is precisely the situation we should have in a properly organised system of education. While the psychological theory would guide and illuminate the practice, acting upon the theory would immediately test it, and thus criticise it, bringing about its revision and growth. In the large and open sense of the words psychology becomes a working hypothesis, instruction is the experimental test and demonstration of the hypothesis; the result is both greater practical control and continued growth in theory (p. 120).

Hence, a language that can accommodate the interaction and dialogue between psychology and education is conceivable. On the other hand, much more effort is needed to construct a language that brings together the disciplines of education, psychology and theology. A theory of Adaptive Religious Education (A.R.E.) is intrinsically built on the dialogue between these three disciplines. Although there are disciplines that bridge psychology and theology, such as pastoral counselling or psychology of religion, and, to a much lesser extent, link education and theology, such as the theology of education, one feels a sense of unease in discussing and bringing together psychology, education and theology. In a secular culture, the language about God and the transcendental nature of humans seems inadequate in psychological and educational discourse. However, even from a purely secular point of view, one could argue that the wisdom experienced and reflected upon by generations of human beings from time immemorial should not be lost. It should be used as a guide in developing our understanding of human life and activity. Furthermore, since Christianity is an anthropologically oriented religion, it is only natural that it should be concerned with all that is human. The distinct contribution of the community of believers lies in its expertise on human realities due to its long experience in human affairs (Paul VI, 1967).

From the dialogue between the study of the biblical community's experience of the adaptive Pedagogy of God, psychology and instructional design, it is being proposed that A.R.E. rests on the following four basic principles,

- i) respect for the human person,
- ii) tension and complementarity between community and individual,
- iii) use of differentiated methods, and
- iv) progressive formation of the self.

Respect for the Human Person

The Judeo-Christian distinctive contribution to the area lies in its understanding and respect of the human person. Throughout salvation history, there is a growing awareness that God wants to establish an intimate relationship with every single human person, thus pointing to the value and dignity of every human being. Indeed the concept of person is so central that other principles could be easily understood as satellites emerging from it and revolving around it. It is the measure against which not only pedagogical principles but also didactic methods are evaluated and shaped.

The notion of person in Christianity is neither egocentric nor individualistic. It reflects individuality and at the same time, openness to others and the Other. It is precisely in this relationship and communion that the person is continuously constituted. Furthermore, in addressing the concept of 'human person' through Christian tradition, one acknowledges wholeness rather than fragmentation. This points to the need to work within a framework that takes into consideration the person holistically rather than limit learning as being influenced by specific characteristics, be

it intelligence, style or motivation. No one individual difference, can explain the whole process of the individual's learning activity.

Thus, A.R.E., unlike the majority of ATI experiments, is bound to work with a wide notion of aptitude. Most ATI experiments have tended to take into consideration single or similar individual difference constructs. A.R.E. strives towards a better understanding of uniqueness by working with various constructs, ranging from 'in the head' characteristics, to situational characteristics and their interaction. Finally it strives to clarify Aptitude Constructs.

Tension and Complementarity Between Community and Individual

A second important factor that ensues from a holistic understanding of the human person is that of relationality. The notion of complementarity between the individual and his/her community is evident in all Scriptures. The nature of the person not only points to individuality but also to openness to others, both human and Divine. The understanding and respect of the human person necessarily implies considering the person in the context of a community.

Focusing on the human person's relational aspect has practical implications in the sphere of learning. In the first instance, it implies that learning within a community is preferred to individualised learning. Stripping learning from the 'community of meaning-making' is equivalent to a mechanisation of learning, thus rendering the person more a machine than a meaning-maker. As Lave (1996) pointed out, 'meaning is not created through individual intentions; it is mutually constituted in relations between activity systems and persons acting, and has a relational character' (p. 18).

The adaptive pedagogy proposed in A.R.E. is not an individualised one. Adapting to the unique needs of the person means taking care of the communitarian aspect of the person and consequently of learning. The view most congruent to A.R.E. is that learning occurs in the context of a community.

The didactic implication of this principle is threefold,

- i) the classroom should be the place where the knowledge and meaning of the community of believers is reviewed and critically re-read,
- ii) Secondly, pedagogy built on A.R.E. principles favours the correlational approach between the experience of the individual that of the present community of believers and the deposit of meaning handed down by generations of believing communities.
- iii) A.R.E. should help the classroom to become a real community of learners thus favouring an environment conducive to the construction of meaning, and knowledge, through practice and interdependence.

Use of Differentiated Methods

The experience of the believing community also points to the differentiated nature of the pedagogy adopted by God and Christ. The naturalness of this principle is to

be attributed to the understanding that every individual has different requirements. This principle is not so much a deduction from Scriptures, as the consequential understanding of the definition of aptitude. Since aptitude is the interaction between the individual's propensities and the situation's affordances, it should logically follow that it is best to offer as many affordances as possible in order to increase the possibility of attunement. The consequence of the complex interdependence between person and situation is that an individual might benefit from treatment A but not from treatment B, even if both treatments have the same aim (Snow, 1991, Snow, 1992).

Snow (1997) introduced the concept of symbol systems such as language culture and visual or verbal luggage. According to Snow, humans have developed these symbols throughout history according to their own abilities. In turn, these systems have, over different generations, shaped the profile of ability development. He notes that symbol systems and abilities overlap in many subtle and important ways. For instance, verbal intelligence and verbal style have a constant affinity with the symbols of language expressed in writing, reading, listening to a language, spelling, knowledge of meaning and so on. Each of these expressions can be broken down into different components. For instance the act of writing includes such skills as repertoire of language, construction of situations, and retrieving meaning. In practical terms this means that A.R.E. needs to discover these symbol systems and build a taxonomy of symbol systems, including their components.

In the context of A.R.E., differentiating learning means providing possibilities that increase the match between student propensities and affordances. This differentiation may occur through the manipulation of the learning situation, which includes the teacher, the teaching method, the materials and the textbook used, as also the development of student propensities. The capability to use different symbol systems assures the possibility of attunement occurring in all students at some point in time. Differentiation may occur over a period, thus balancing between what is offered to groups over the duration of a course.

Progressive Formation of the Self

True respect for the human person does not only call for the adaptation of the teaching method to the requirements of the individual but it demands challenging students so as to develop skills to efficiently adapt to new environments and learning situations.

Various researchers point to the malleability of such constructs as intelligence, (Mayer, 2000) and learning strategies (Schmeck, 1988). Some point to techniques that could be used in order to develop these constructs in the classroom environment (cf. Corno & Snow, 1986; cf. Biggs, 2001). A possible approach could be that of modifying the learning context, thus making new demands on the learners. Since learning strategies are the consequence of students' engagement with the learning context (Ramsden, 1988), the challenge produced by the new learning situation, together with the learned learning skills, will help the learner to adopt the strategies necessary for success. This mode of teaching learning strategies is the

preferred approach in A.R.E. but caution is needed, since students tend to adopt those strategies that they envisage teachers will reward (Ramsden, 1988).

Promises and Challenges

Gellel (2005) conducted empirical research, involving 1219, and 13 year old students in 12 Maltese secondary schools in order to assess whether A.R.E. generates better retention of content at cognitive and affective levels, and whether it is possible to adapt to individual differences in Religious Education within a normal class set up.

The empirical research sought to develop a method that adapts to the requirements of students but due to practical considerations it ignored the fourth A.R.E. objective, that is, to help students acquire the skills and strategies to adapt to the learning situation. However, it sought to take into consideration a wide interpretation of aptitude. Data regarding gender, scholastic ability, working memory capacity, prior knowledge, cognitive style, learning style and three different communities of practice were collected and the individual difference included 'in the head' characteristics, situational characteristics and their interaction.

The population was randomly divided into two groups, namely those who were given the typical textbook and normal lessons, and those who were administered the A.R.E. treatment. The A.R.E. treatment included the provision of

- i) specifically designed textbooks, which applied the principles of A.R.E., as shown in Figure 1.,
- ii) teacher's manuals which provided space for differentiated teaching through the use of three symbol systems, verbal, visual and concrete, and
- iii) teaching aids, such as video clips, handouts and music clips.

Prior to the nine week treatment, all students were given a pre-test in order to assess their knowledge on the subject they were going to be taught. After the treatments, students were given a post-test. Throughout the empirical research, great care was taken to control variables as much as possible. Data was analysed in order to verify whether the students who underwent the A.R.E. benefited more than their counterparts and, more importantly, whether the A.R.E. treatment was able to reduce the effects of individual differences.

Overall, the results indicated that the first three A.R.E. principles and the practical suggestions developed for the application of A.R.E. were a step in the right direction. Generally, students administered the A.R.E. treatment significantly outperformed students who underwent the typical R.E. treatment. Results also support the notion that A.R.E. was not only more successful in producing better results, but most importantly, it was more capable of meeting individual differences in the classroom. The interaction between individual differences, treatment, outcome and assessment, almost consistently produced the same pattern. A.R.E. was successful in reducing the explained variance and the steepness of the slope in most of the statistical tests administered.

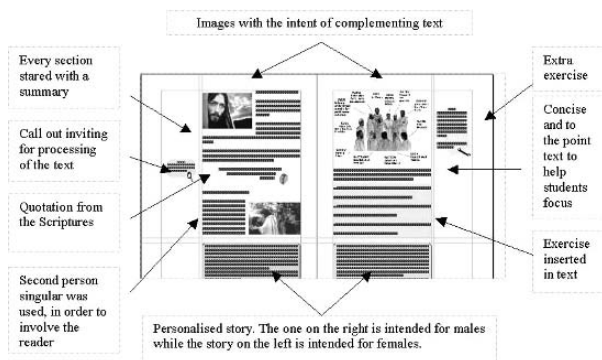


Figure 1. A typical page from the A.R.E. textbook

Apart from revealing interesting data on specific individual difference constructs, the study also points to new avenues for Religious Education. The data suggests that A.R.E. is a valid and useful approach to be used in secondary schools, and that therefore, there is a need for more research in order to develop this didactic method further. Research in this area is never a finished business, not only because of the vastness of the subjects under scrutiny but also because of the inability to define and describe uniqueness. The infinity of individuals and of situations makes every treatment a process of unfolding surprises. It is, however, the awareness of the enormous benefit that Religious Education, students, teachers, and schools will get that theory and empirical research need to be pursued. Every long journey starts with a first step and this research is a first step, hopefully, in the right direction.

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SPIRITUALITY AND IDENTITY WITHIN/WITHOUT RELIGION

Dr. Daniel G. Scott

*School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria,
British Columbia*

Introduction

This chapter will explore the interface of religion and spirituality in the lives of youth, paying attention to its impact on their identity and spiritual development. It is, in part, inspired by my experience of working both in religious and secular contexts with older adolescents who frequently claimed that they were spiritual and not religious. My attempts to consider this distinction in their self-definition influenced my perspective on and interest in spirituality and identity. The interplay of religion and spirituality, which is deeply embedded in the socio-cultural actualities of young people's lives and experience, had a profound effect on their spiritual identity development. They were expressing something of their time and culture in making their claim differentiating spirituality and religion while simultaneously passing comment on religious institutions.

I will weave together several strands in order to explicate my approach to spiritual development and spiritual identity formation. An introductory strand will explore the entanglement of culture and identity, touching on some implications for research in children and youth spirituality. A second strand will describe qualities of adolescent development that are aspects of spiritual development and part of the process of spiritual identity. Another strand will explore the dynamic relationship of spirituality and religions and how they contain/do not contain one another and include examples from the growing body of literature on spirituality, religion and spiritual development. I will then consider the impact of context/culture on the development of adolescent spirituality and identity formation addressing the relationship of social location and the shaping of a spiritual identity through belonging, resistance, participation, believing and choosing.

Strand: Identity and Context

In order to address identity and context I want to clarify that I do not see context and identity as completely separate. Mistry and Diez (2004) treat 'culture as context' and as 'meaning-making' (p. 150) and consequently understand the interactive nature of culture and development. If culture is meaning making, that is, a way of making sense of and interpreting the world through its frame of reference, it is significant for any consideration of spiritual development because, as Mistry and Diez claim:

behaviour is shaped by the context of the cultural activity in which it occurs and is observed. Particular modes of thinking, speaking, and behaving *arise from* and *remain integrally tied to* concrete forms of social practice (Coles, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985) (Italics in original. Mistry and Diez, 2004, p. 148).

Culture provides a through line to thinking, speaking and behaving that crosses generational experience and is expressed in the day-to-day practices of people in a culture. Adolescents are shaped by their contexts even as they strive to establish independent identities. Their resistances and independence struggles are always mediated through their 'home' culture even as they occasionally serve as critiques of that culture.

Religious and spiritual cultures are also forms of social process and constructs of human cultural activity. All identity is shaped by culture, as are any articulations of identity. Spiritual identity grows out of, is a response to, and is shaped by socio-cultural location. This has a significant impact on how we come to understand children and adolescent spirituality, particularly through research. Responses to research surveys and interviews collected from children and youth as data to understand spirituality are firmly embedded in context. Participants answer from within their culture and cannot step out to formulate non-contextual responses. The developmental capacity of younger research participants means that they are likely to echo their context in honest but non self-reflective ways. They may only be able to tell what they think or believe, mirroring their family culture, but be unable to reflect on those beliefs as they lack critical distance. Younger children are accustomed to giving answers to adults that attempt to be what they think the adult expects. Some researchers (Hay & Nay, 1998) working with children under the age of ten are clear about the difficulties implicit in spiritual research because of the influence of context on the children's responses and on their willingness to respond. They note children will call on available cultural vocabulary to describe their experiences and insight, using religious cultural language even when their families are not religious because they lack alternate ways to express themselves.

In contrast, a child who attends a religious school who participates in a study on spiritual life will respond to questions about his or her spiritual life in language that mirrors the norms of their religious setting. To assume that children's understanding can be generalised is to miss how much context shapes answers. There is need for caution in interpreting children's senses of meaning without attention to contextual

influence. Mistry and Diez, (2004) outline the problem of understanding meaning pointing out the difficulty of ascertaining how meaning is made:

Since it is assumed that culture and behaviour are essentially inseparable...the goal is to understand the directive force of shared meaning systems and how these meanings are constructed in given contexts (D'Andrade & Strauss, 1992; Harkness & Super, 1992). Understanding context, therefore, includes understanding the tacit social and interactional norms of the individuals existing within those settings and whose behaviours and expectations both shape and are shaped by the institutional structures of which they are a part (Harwood, Miller & Irizarry, 1995) (Mistry and Diez, 2004, p. 150).

Meaning making as a cultural process that shapes identity development requires a double alertness for researchers studying spirituality. Identity is always interactive and grows out of response to context. How do adolescents take up spiritual identity in the midst of cultural interactions and respond to the expectations of home culture as they make meaning and claim identity?

One advantage of looking at the adolescent shift to adult identity is that it is a time of deliberate choice and self-authored claims where resistance to and departure from cultural norms can and does take place—although within cultural boundaries. Resistance to 'home' is still a response but may include a degree of self-awareness and deliberate distancing that is less common in younger children. Almost all aspects of development are in an extended period of perturbation in the early adolescent years. Physical growth peaks. New cognitive skills are being developed. Socially and emotionally, young adolescents move from social settings that are frequently limited to family, neighbourhood or village, school, place of worship (if any) to settings that are more varied, and more complex. Primary schools give way to secondary or upper level schools with more diverse populations, different social configurations and a wider range of social and emotional relationships and community contacts. In some cases, the geography of life expands to include entry into the world of work with contacts based on demands other than familial responsibilities. In many cases social encounters include romantic and sexual first time experiences.

In contemporary urban settings some youth, by the beginning of adolescence, live in diverse cultural and social milieu and may have acquired experience and skills in multiple cultural contexts. Young people living across cultures may form multiple identities in order to survive socially, emotionally and spiritually in their daily experience where home, religion, school, community, and peer contexts may be culturally diverse (Nesbitt, 2004). Their mirrors may have multiple facets that they turn one way or another in response to contextual demands, demonstrating a valuable skill set of living in complexity. The identities that they construct are, and will be, their best response to the expectations of complicated contexts. They employ a variety of personal strategies to make their lives livable and acceptable: embracing, testing, experimenting, questioning and resisting.

Their engagement with spirituality and spiritual identity may or may not include a religious belief or practice. Their responses to the thinking they encounter and

how they take up the meanings of their milieu will vary. They may, as did the central character in Yann Martel's (2002) *Life of Pi*, be trying to live in several religions at once, much to the distress of family and religious leaders with their more restricted views of belief options.

There are no guaranteed outcomes in the sifting and choosing of what will matter in life or what will be valued; nor is there certainty that a young person reaches what his/her context would see as a 'culturally desirable outcome' (Mistry & Diez, p. 160). Being raised in a culture does not guarantee adherence to it or its ways of making meaning. However, the impact of culture as context remains central in the process of identity development.

Strand: Spiritual Development

I outline here elements of adolescent development that pertain to spiritual formation and spiritual identity to suggest a framework for understanding and interpreting adolescent spiritual experience. This strand looks at experience in the middle of adolescent life. Children who are beginning adult life are already enculturated but at a threshold where their work of forming identity requires new behaviour, thinking and responses in taking up adult roles and responsibilities. It is a time of testing out and trying on various identities and styles. With their increase in skills and capacity, young adolescents may question their own contexts paying attention to its 'truth' for them, studying its claims and testing its integrity and congruity.

The transition through adolescence begins as children take the first steps of becoming adult during their tenth to fourteenth years. Traditional developmental theory and psychology have not offered much help in understanding spiritual development. There are aspects of cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development that have significance for spiritual identity formation. I suggest that these overlapping developmental qualities form the nexus of spiritual development. Just as spiritual identity is embedded in cultural contexts and constructs, so spiritual development is embedded in the spectrum of development processes and constructs.

As children come of age they enter a time of wonder/wondering (Hart, 2003) and begin to re-experience the world as new. Their cognitive capacities and their emotional lives are changing and thus their (relational) consciousness (Hay and Nye, 1998) and sensibilities are also changing. They engage the world with intensity, developing new skills, insights, questions and speculations. They establish a beginning adult identity that includes a more self-aware acquisition of meaning and values. They must move from believing under the influence of external authorities to owning and claiming values and meaning with their own interior authority. This involves the development of their voice (Gilligan, 1982; 2002; Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990) and the ownership of their own claims.

Changing and developing voice is not only a physical ability but is an important marker of self. The formation of inner authority and self-belief is part of the

development of personal integrity. It involves both a capacity to own and to articulate what matters in one's own way with one's own voice. Meaning, values and mattering are to be claimed and lived. Adolescents draw on all available resources, not only the familiar ones of home culture but also the myriad options to which their emerging status as adults gives them access.

As well as meaning making, there is often a new sense of looking toward the future. A vocation or life interest may take hold of an adolescent's imagination, offering a sense of purpose and direction. The future, which felt far away in childhood, becomes more present and possible in adolescence. It can take on a sense of immediacy or even urgency. Choices in the present become important definers of possible futures. An adolescent with a sense of purpose or calling may become deliberate and focused in interests, skill acquisition and educational goals. A sense of calling, known as vocation in some religious traditions, is part of becoming adult and can shape many lives (Hillman, 1996).

As cognitive and emotional capacities develop, adolescents have a remarkable ability to see into and through things. Their vision is shaped both by their new thinking skills, with sharpened critical capacities and by the complexity of new emotional insight awakening in them as they assess others, the world and ways of living. They are in search of what will be important and meaningful for them. Sometimes their critique is part of a peer process: young adolescents have a remarkable capacity to share insight, sometimes without words, when assessing social and emotional situations. They can be highly attuned to hypocrisy, misrepresentation and compromise. Their vision may be shaped by clear but simplistic values that see situations as either/or: right or wrong.

Some adolescents have visionary experiences that seem to give them insight across time (Hart, 2003; Robinson, 1983) and can include mystical experiences, prophetic insights or far reaching dreams. For some the dreams are warnings of danger or harm to themselves or others (Scott, 2004). Their visionary experience can produce a range of emotions from fear to elation for adolescents and equally strong, frequently negative, responses in adults around them.

Their experiences of voice, vocation and vision are part of their search for belonging. They seek the places where they will belong but also places where they feel embraced as belonging—I call this 'being belonged'—where there is a congruency between what they seek for themselves and what they see in a welcoming place. Belonging is mutual: ownership requires owning and being owned. A search for belonging may involve a series of trial and error tests of beliefs, contexts and life styles.

Threaded through these experiences is a process of identity development. Becoming adult and taking ownership of what matters; of what will be treasured; of an acceptable self, is a life journey. Developing an adult spiritual identity occurs simultaneously with and through the other developmental processes of adult identity making. Maintaining congruency between a sense of self and life choices is critical in developing an acceptable identity. It includes grappling with a spiritual sense of self and with religious belief and adherence.

Strand: Religion Spirituality Secularity

In order to situate the spiritual identity process this section will examine the cultural dynamics of religion, spirituality and secularity as factors in the contextual landscape contributing to the identity process. Between those who argue that spirituality must be and is always, inevitably a matter of religion—religious practice, education and adherence to a tradition—and those who argue that spirituality is personal, open-ended and primarily an interior experience that may not include a religious adherence are a variety of positions that expect more or less of religious involvement. As much of the contemporary world is influenced by a secularity that assumes neither religion nor spirituality, one's orientation to matters of spirit is not simply an either-religion-or-spirituality dynamic. In considering the spiritual identity development of children and youth it is necessary to step out of religious/secular and spiritual/religious dualities and address the mixed influences and multiple locations of contemporary culture. There are many complexities and nuances possible in socio-cultural location and impact.

Contemporary spirituality literature has an on-going discussion regarding the religion/spirituality interplay that identifies some of the possible positions. Zinnbauer, Pargament and Scott (1999) maintain that 'religion is a broader more general construct than spirituality' and 'religion encompasses not only the search for sacred ends (spirituality) but the search for secular ends through sacred means' (p. 910). They claim religion as the meta-container for secular and spiritual experience. However, Benson, Roehlkepartain and Rude (2003) opt for a more middle position in which, following Reich (2001) four options of 'religion and spirituality as synonymous or fused; one as a subdomain of the other; religion and spirituality as separate domains; and religion and spirituality as distinct but overlapping domains' (p. 209). They adopt the fourth perspective of religion and spirituality having both distinct and shared qualities and territory, embracing a more complex view of contextual realities.

The theoretical debate of religion/spirituality/secularity in the emerging field of youth spirituality studies is as much about the contemporary socio-political struggle over the role of religion in the public domain as it is about a critical understanding of children and youth spiritual development. There are a number of tensions about the role and significance of religion in public life and the emergence of spirituality as a distinct area of study outside of the religious domain. Is the public space to include religion? Can it include spirituality? Must the commons be secular? These ideological questions underlie the debate and indicate the tensions over the relationship of religion, culture, spirituality and secularity. In some cases it appears religious advocates are using spirituality as a re-entry point into the public domain, evoking resistance from other quarters. Secular resistance to religious practices in public spaces can also provoke strong reactions in religious adherents multiplying the tensions.

These debates obscure the significance of research with children and young adolescents that explores their spiritual experience as a basis for understanding spiritual development. In the research-based literature of children's spirituality,

a number of the major figures do separate spirituality and religion. Robert Coles (1990), writing from his psychiatric orientation, notes that one of his young patients Connie let him know:

...that her religious life was far more many-sided than I had been prepared to admit—and that there was a personal *spiritual* life in her that was by no means to be equated with her *religious* life. It is this evolving distinction I most recall today; its emergence constituted a critical place in my work with Connie and also in the recent research that preceded the writing of this book (Italics in original, p. 14).

Coles' colleague and clinical supervisor Dr. Abraham Fineman further clarifies his thinking by suggesting about Connie that: 'She's an unconventionally religious child. There's a spirituality at work in her, and we might explore her spiritual psychology' (p. 15). Coles (1990) titles his book: *The spiritual life of children*. In spite of the number of children he interviews that use religious language and are located in distinct religious contexts, he is clear that the religious and spiritual are not the same.

David Hay (1998) makes a similar delineation but from a quite different vantage. He draws on Alister Hardy's work and biological assumptions to point out that:

Spirituality is not the exclusive property of any one religion or for that matter of religion in general. Spiritual awareness could even be signified, and perhaps would be bound to be signified, in secular and even anti-religious language amongst those who for historical reasons are alienated from religious culture (p. 11).

Hay cites Catholic theologian Karl Rahner who argues that even if the terms for God were to disappear from language 'in the decisive moments of our lives we would still be constantly encompassed by this nameless mystery of our existence' (p. 19). Hay then uses Rahner's words 'It is possible to talk about God without being spiritual' at the beginning of his chapter '*A Geography of the Spirit*' and proposes the inverse: 'it is also possible to be spiritual without talking about God' (p. 57). He stresses:

It is important not to get caught into the assumption that spirituality can only be recognised by the use of a specialised religious language. I have spoken about the difficulty with almost all research on children's spiritual life, up to the very recent past, in that it has been focused on God-talk rather than spirituality (p. 57).

Tobin Hart (2003) offers a similar insight:

Most often when researchers have looked at children's spirituality, they have limited their consideration to 'God talk,' that is, how children think and talk about God. These researchers have generally concluded that children do not

and cannot have a spiritual life prior to the development of formal reasoning, usually sometime in adolescence...When we, as adults, use these assumptions to filter our understanding of children, we miss their innate spirituality. But spirituality lies beyond the rational and beyond thoughts about God (p. 4).

Differentiating religion and spirituality is significant in the identification of children and youth as inherently spiritual. A child is spiritual without instruction and regardless of cultural context. It is not a matter of whether a child is or is not spiritual in a particular way or with a particular religious formation or style. Spirituality is as normative and natural as physicality or emotionality. Children are spiritual. Children are physical. Children are emotional. This assumption is vital for any approach in research, in pedagogical practice and in how we view children and our expectations for them as spiritual beings. How they take up their identity, how they engage voice, vision and vocation, and whether they can acknowledge and integrate their own spirituality are shaped by their culture's assumptions about their inherent spiritual nature.

I suggest two axioms regarding spirituality and religion in contemporary secular culture that offer a more open space for a consideration of children and youth in context. First, spirituality may or may not be a nest for religion. For some, religion is not a necessity for spiritual formation or identity, while for others, religion may be significant in giving shape to spiritual identity. I assume in keeping with Ó Murchu (1997), that spirituality gave rise to religions. The structuring and codification of religious practice did not produce spirituality but were a response to the spiritual that is already part of being human. This is not to dismiss or diminish the significance of religious beliefs but to see them as socially constructed forms that grow out of human experience and cultures, and in turn, shape cultures and human experience. The interplay of religion and politics in current public life demonstrates the power of beliefs and claims to influence social life, public policy and options for identity.

Identity and spiritual development, whether they are personal, communal or cultural are interactive processes. All of us arrive at identity and do spiritual development in the midst of things, even as we, in turn, contribute to the re-making of our context through our ways of living.

In the second axiom I propose that religion, and all other communal settings, are always nests for spirituality. Spiritualities produced in different settings may vary and be either positive, adding to life and value, or negative, reducing life and its meaning. Having assumed the spiritual to be normative it is essential to attend to the quality of the spirituality being engendered in any setting. Not all spiritualities are life giving. Nor do all religious contexts create positive spiritualities. As youth develop identities the spirituality they claim will shape their values and life choices and can be assessed for their assumptions, quality and affect. As spiritual identity has such lasting impact on family and community its full impact may take years to be clear. A spirituality is neither neutral nor isolated.

I have an additional concern regarding the spirituality-religion discussion. Where the debate ignores children and their experience privileging theoretical concerns,

there is a danger that children's natural spirituality will be marginalised and made invisible. If it is assumed children are only spiritual when they are religious in a particular way, the potential danger is that, if a child rejects religion, he/she may be judged (and come to judge her/himself) as unspiritual. Children must be seen as spiritual, not requiring instruction, a particular kind of intelligence, decision making capacities or interventions to be spiritual. They already are. How they are formed by their culture and how they respond to that formational process becomes the concern. They may move in and out of their home context as they figure out their own direction clarifying their experience of spirituality and its meaning for them.

There is, however, a need to be realistic about contexts and influence. Children can and do have bad religious and/or spiritual experiences. Negative responses to the beliefs of a community or family can arise from being violated or abandoned; from feeling misunderstood, unduly pressured, silenced or excluded; or from feeling that the community structure offered no clear limits or so many restrictions as to be oppressive. Those who mistrust a spiritual or religious environment because of their experience do not necessarily have a diminished interest in spirituality. They too will be developing spiritually with their own forms of voice, vision, vocation, sense of belonging and 'being belonged'. In their experience it may be necessary to hold spirituality and religion apart and consequently, their spiritual identity development may occur outside of religious frames of reference. They may seek religious experience or insight from traditions outside their familial one.

As well, there may be people in non-religious settings whose context carries an understanding of religious traditions that makes them feel and seem negative. We must not assume that they do not have spiritual insight, interest or concern. Their cultural location may delimit their access to religious communities yet they may seek spirituality in other ways. Their response to religion may be an act of resistance or self-preservation in the face of colonialism, oppression or social inequities. They too will develop spiritual identities.

A community's fears or aspirations are like containers that surround adolescent identity in formation steeping it in the community ethos. Youth make themselves and their lives from what is familiar, what they know and what they hope for. The tenor of a community matters as it is formed by the culture; influenced by social, economic, historical and political realities, as well as by natural circumstances. There are no neutral communities. All are influential in the identity development process of the young.

Cultures also present the young with role models to be emulated, admired and copied, and sometimes figures to be shunned and dismissed. They have impact but not always the one intended. Adolescents have individual trajectories that draw on their own sense of self and emerging subjectivities shaping their response to role models. Integrating the values being modeled is not a straightforward, linear process. It is entangled in context drawing on a range of messages and signals from the culture.

In contexts that had or have deliberate coming of age ceremonies the shaping influence of culture was understood and carefully nurtured (Eliade, 1975; Turner,

1967; Sullwold, 1987; Scott, 1998; Westerman, 2001). During a coming of age process, a young person moved from the form of a child to the form of an adult and during this liminal time he/she was malleable and could be re-formed. It was understood that during this critical spiritual time those who were without a set form were at risk and could be mis-formed by experience and other influences. Becoming a successful adult was acknowledged as difficult. A great deal of socio-cultural energy and attention was paid to the young to assist them to make this transition in ways that best suited the culture. The goal is and was to produce capable, acceptable and competent adults.

Rites of passage use ceremony, ritual, periods of teaching, carefully constructed rule breaking, confrontations with mortality, explorations of sexual identity, guiding elders and communal participation in various combinations to affect the adult identity making process. The process includes attention to spirituality, to the meanings and values necessary for life in the culture and to the skills needed for adult life. Spirituality is acknowledged and woven into the cultural process.

Weaving the Strands

In the last section I began to weave the strands together addressing the question: To what degree does 'culture as meaning-making' shape the formation of a spiritual identity? In contexts that use deliberate rites of passage there is awareness that the process of becoming adult can be deliberate cultural action that must include spiritual sensitivity. In many religious communities residual forms of coming of age ceremonies mark acceptance into the adult ceremonial life of the community. What is lacking is the parallel cultural process of acceptance as adults with symbolic markers in the broader social context. I have written about this elsewhere (Scott, 1998) and now want to turn to consider how in becoming adults, adolescents develop spiritually based on the developmental qualities described above while in the midst of a primarily secular culture. What might we expect to see in their experiences as signs of spiritual identity development? What are some of the challenges that adolescents must face? And how does context act to shape spiritual development?

I want to be clear that I do not see identity as essential or fixed, or self as something that already exists and is to be uncovered along the way. Rather identity is a continual re-formation process of shifts, adaptations, and renewal. Identity formation requires responsiveness to change. Rites of passage literature speaks to identity as being formed as a vessel or container where the cultural knowledge can only be added after the vessel acquires an appropriate shape. The passage process is intended to provide that shaping. The process assumes a stable culture with stable adult roles performed capably in culturally necessary ways. It is a conserving form that produces cultural continuity. Contemporary culture is not stable, with few adult roles that will last over the decades of a lifetime. Life is now being lived in communities that are shifting and changing. Becoming adult requires different skills and capacities. What shapes are now appropriate? What knowledge will make for a 'good' adult?

Young people are required to incorporate a wide range of influences and experiences from their contexts in becoming adult. Changes in their lives and context appear to be more constant than sameness or stability. Adolescents becoming adults are doing so in the midst of flux and in response to it. Youth living in secularised, individualist societies with daily experiences mediated by electronic technologies of communication, advertising and representation are attuned to and influenced by that culture. They cannot escape some culture-at-large impact. Identity formation is not solitary work. It is interactive.

In spite of appeals for singular, clear stances that seek to simplify spirituality, I believe it is necessary to consider spirituality as a significant window into the complex actuality of late modern/post-modern life experience for contemporary youth. Life is multi-tracked, uncertain and ambiguous. Nesbitt (2004) points out youth who are being raised in religious environments are often living multiple identities in the pluricultural realities of their wider lives. Their experiences are neither simple nor singular with identity formation based on an assemblage of many voices and images, which can change rapidly. Life may be tinged with irony or cynicism, and simplistic positions have a limited capacity to meet these challenges.

I will now turn to voice, vocation, vision, belonging/being belonged and ownership, addressing them briefly in terms of how they may be taken up in context with some implications for spiritual development.

Voice, Vision, Vocation

Voice is a critical part of spiritual development in adolescents. Gilligan's (1982) work underlined the quality of a different kind of voice as part of moral decision making for young women. In later work, Gilligan (2002) pays more attention to the loss of connection to one's own true voice and expression of feeling and its implications for both men and women. In a study of girls' adolescent diaries Sinats, Scott, McFerran, Hittos, and Craig, (2005) explore the maintenance of one's own voice through diary writing as a way of preserving sensitivity and spiritual self-awareness. Sinats (2005) further explores the consequences of being severed from one's sensitivity and voice, illustrating the kinds of loss and self-destructive behaviours that arise in response to perceptions and awareness that cannot be safely expressed.

It is not a matter of an adolescent having the correct answers or merely knowing what a cultural demands. Voice is a matter of integrity and congruity. To be able to express insights and questions, to explore how the world seems with language and ideas is part of taking up a spiritual identity that has inner authority and is sustainable. Having a link from what seems right and true from within to the capacity to voice that sense externally is necessary for spiritual development. The ability to address context and integrate experience through knowledgeable articulation allows ownership and authority to develop.

In coming to one's own voice, an adolescent is expressing his/her own character as well as articulating what matters. It is interesting to note that some religious

traditions contain stories of young adolescents who grapple with a combination of voice and visionary experience (In Judaism: Samuel in the temple as a young adolescent hears the voice of the Divine giving him instructions to speak of the fall of Eli's family and priesthood) or voice and vocation (In Christianity: Jesus in the temple precincts claiming to his family that he needs to begin his vocation before they are ready to accept his calling). Response to the young experiencing and claiming voice, vision, and vocation determines whether a context is promoting their spiritual well being. To acknowledge adolescent insight and visionary experience requires communal sensitivity. Being denied that space will force adolescents to sever either from themselves or from their community in order to preserve their own sense of self and of what matters. The ability to come to one's own voice, have one's insights and visions acknowledged and be able to take up a calling does matter for the whole community and needs the support of the community.

In a composite study (World Vision Canada, January, 1993) of parenting styles and the maintenance of family values, families and communities that practiced the most authoritarian styles had the least success in passing on values and the least satisfaction in parenting. Parenting styles marked by more openness (permissive and authoritative), shared decision-making, and less rigid barriers to outside influence had more success in teaching values and more satisfaction in parenting. The community's capacity to pass on its values and traditions is affected by the way it tries to do so. Some approaches create learning environments that are more successful in engaging adolescents, giving them support and space to follow communal wisdom in forming their adult spiritual identities. This is not to suggest that there is a simple way to indoctrinate youth into accepting a cultural perspective. The successful parenting models require openness, flexibility, negotiation and shared decision making. Those qualities model the values to be passed on. They do not guarantee an outcome.

Belonging, Being Belonged and Ownership

How a community welcomes adolescents into adult life will make a difference to the long-term acceptance of and participation in that community. A context provides implicit and explicit messages that shape its capacity for acceptance and they will be perceived by the young maturing in those contexts. Some youth, because of their strong need for belonging, will choose compliance and adaptation to cultural messages. Others, because of their own character or sense of vision and vocation will resist, demanding more of their community or will leave in search of a more open space that gives back a sense of 'being belonged' without demanding a compromise of voice and integrity.

Context can function at many levels. In an environment of social and political uncertainty strong singular positions with definitive claims marked by certainty can be appealing. Where fear is a dominant social factor the young may be drawn to social identities that promise surety and make clear borders between insider and outsider, acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. True believers (Hoffer, 1951)

may be convinced of the supremacy of their own position and beliefs. The strong positions offered by fundamentalist movements may provide certainty against the seeming chaos of world conflicts and cultures (Armstrong, 2000). Their essentialist positions, although often seen as reacting to the fragmentation of post-modern life, may be better understood as part of that fragmentation, creating and sustaining enclave thinking and oppositional social and cultural politics in response to contextual pressures. Because belonging and 'being belonged' are so important for adolescent development, the embrace and support given by these communities may offer adolescents a way of living that meets their immediate needs and consequently is not questioned by them. The values and perspective of the social location will be accepted and absorbed.

The distinction between religion and spirituality becomes significant in these circumstances as there is more at stake than beliefs. Do the values and ethics of a community provide a young person with a life giving orientation? Do they lead to tolerance of others? Respect for differences and diversity? What does the community demand of the young person to achieve their goals? How much must the young give up to be included or to succeed? Fundamentalist environments may provide a strong sense of security but demand the suppression of voice in exchange for belonging. Although appearing successful, the underlying spirituality may be destructive.

If young people are becoming adults in a world that requires them to live globally, they will need skills, insights and emotional and spiritual capacities to deal with the changing and pluricultural nature of the world. They need home communities that can foster those capacities.

In a world that functions on a market place model, including in the religious and spiritual domains (Bibby, 1987; 1993) how people construct their religious adherence and loyalties is constantly being shaped by the shifts and trends in the larger culture. Young people in religious contexts will choose their own level of acceptance and engagement with the community's assumptions and claims; as will youth in any other location, secular or spiritual, choose for their lives. A community with clear boundaries and a prescribed means of approach to the Divine may provide certainty and legitimacy for some. For others, the certainty itself will be unattractive. They may be more at ease in uncertainty and complexity and view the ambiguity of the world as preferable. Other adolescents will feel compelled to be critical of their native context in response to seeing more of the world's options, setting them on a quest to become something other than the familiar form of 'home'.

Religion may play a significant role in the formation of self by providing defining structures and integration into a community but it may also serve as a site of rejection. Many contemporary youth have no identifiable religious context. Religion may appear unhelpful and outside of their acceptable experience as they seek dynamic locations that can provide the options for engagement, resistance, and self-definition. They seek sites that will provide belonging and membership, mattering and being valued.

It is necessary for those concerned with the spiritual development of adolescents to resist an oppositional reading of social spiritual location, inviting a more complex understanding of spiritual identity and providing a richer, more complex environment for understanding the possibilities for spiritual development and identity. Spiritual development goes on in every context. In every context the critical concern must be for the quality of the spirituality being developed and whether, within or without religion, it is a spirituality that respects the spiritual journey of each young person, his or her integrity. The concern must also see individual spiritual identity in the context of the community, respecting the connection to that community and its health and integrity. Spirituality must be contextually grounded. The community has to provide space for the development of voice, the honoring of vision and vocation. It has to welcome and embrace. And it must trust that the young themselves have access to and are attending to spirit. They may be teachers, have insight, knowledge and concern that comes from their spirituality. Their wisdom may be necessary for the health and well being of their communities. Spiritual development is an interactive mutual exchange.

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REDISCOVERING THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION IN EDUCATION: PROMOTING A SENSE OF SELF AND PLACE, MEANING AND PURPOSE IN LEARNING

Dr. Marian de Souza

Australian Catholic University, Australia

Introduction

This chapter will examine the movement in Australia to incorporate a Values approach to education and discuss some of the inherent problems. It will then draw on existing literature to argue that one way forward is to recognise the spiritual dimension in education since spirituality is relational and therefore has implications for the values that become expressions in any society. It will argue that spirituality as an innate element of being should have an essential role in the learning process and it will discuss the implications such an understanding may have for the development of school environments and educational programs where teaching and learning should promote a sense of self, place, meaning and purpose. This may lead to a more accessible and well-balanced learning process which may reduce chances of students becoming isolated and alienated and increase their chances of experiencing an educational process that addresses the whole person.

Background

The advent of values education is not a new concept. Since the 1970's the concept of Values Education and Values Clarification intermittently received attention in government policies and curriculum reviews. However, the difficulty in reaching a common understanding of what constituted values education meant that teachers were unclear about the expected outcomes and this was sometimes accompanied by feelings of inadequacy to teach content that was non-defined, open to challenge, possibly invasive and, certainly, subjective. Therefore, there was little progress in the

way of curriculum development in Values Education. Instead, the outcomes-based approach to learning that has dominated Victorian curriculum in the past several years has been cognitive based and has widened the gap between cognitive and affective learning. This has been heightened by the interventionist literacy and numeracy programs which have been introduced along with testing procedures (AIM) at different levels in primary schools.

However, there are still too many children who are not benefiting from mainstream educational programs and some of our young people are paying a huge price. Statistics abound which highlight the problems with young people – lack of employment, drug and alcohol issues, violence and abuse, homelessness, aspects of mental health and suicide (for instance, see Mission Australia, 2002 and also their 2004 Youth Survey). Of further concern are recent figures indicating the rising tide of depression amongst adolescents and children, even at primary school levels.

It would appear appropriate, then, that as we reach the next cycle of curriculum initiatives in our educational history, some attention is given to a more balanced approach that addresses both cognitive and affective learning. In the past year we have witnessed the documents from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) on the Victorian Essential Learnings Framework that proposed the incorporation of a personal and social dimension into the learning and teaching programs across the curriculum. As well, nine values were identified in the findings of a study managed by the Curriculum Corporation, *The Values Education Study*, which was commissioned by the Federal Minister for Education in 2002 and was supported by the State and Territory ministers. In brief, the study, while acknowledging that ‘values are often highly contested’, based the identification of the nine values on data collected from the sixty-nine schools that took part in the project. It was claimed that these nine values were seen to be consistent with Australia’s democratic traditions including beliefs in equality, freedom and the rule of law, and our overall commitment to a multicultural society where all are entitled to justice and a fair go, and therefore, should be included in educational programs.

It is my contention that this claim or assumption is problematic and prompts the question: Are these values really shared consistently by individuals and communities across classrooms and communities? Hugh Mackay’s (2004) description of a ‘Values Gap’ (p. 21) would suggest not:

If you ask me to tell you how I think I should live – what values I should live by—I can tell you. But don’t look at my life for the evidence (Mackay, 2004, p. 21).

As Mackay makes obvious, when we talk about values, most of us can list certain values that we would consider universal and we would be surprised if someone challenged these suppositions. In an ideal world our surprise would be understandable but in the pluralistic context of Australian society consisting of multi

faiths, multi cultures, sub cultures and, even more subtle, hidden cultures (where I say and publicly promote one thing but my lived practice may resemble something quite different) such claims, arguably, lack some credibility.

The terminology used is also problematic since it is based on the assumption that values are a good thing. However, young people today are regularly exposed to certain values and life styles adopted by the rich and famous, sporting heroes, politicians and others that would give lie to an assumption that all values are good things. What is frequently played out in our newspapers and across television screens are not the nine values listed in the above document. Instead we see, hear and read, time and again, incidents of deception and misinformation to achieve power (and votes); of greed and lust; of undervaluing certain members of society by the insidious use of labels and other derogatory terms to identify them and so on. With such exposure, how do we encourage students to be truthful and honest when they witness the re-election of governments whose representations and actions have been exposed as misleading and deceitful? How do we develop in young boys a respect for girls and women when they hear of alleged cases of violence and rape involving highly paid footballers or other sporting heroes who are their role models? How do we encourage empathy amongst our young people for the Elders in society when many have little exposure to older people or, indeed, the process of ageing?

This paper contends that the incorporation of certain values into curriculum documents, if it is to be at all successful in practice and not result in confusion and ambiguity, must be developed within a framework that authenticates and gives meaning to the selected values. In religious schools, for instance, certain values will be seen as essential for a particular religious practice, thus, Gospel values or Islamic Values are imbued with certain understandings and meanings thereby becoming 'value laden' within the particular framework of the school. In a secular school system, some other framework must be developed to give the chosen values credibility and meaning. If students and teachers understand the significance and meaning of particular values within such a framework, there is a greater chance that the incorporation of a set of common values into the curriculum across all schools will be successful.

It is proposed here that such a framework can be based on the spiritual dimension in education. However, the word 'spiritual' because of its previously close association with religion and religious traditions in the Western world often provokes distrust and even hostility within secular educational contexts. Consequently, while there has been much discussion and debate in other Western countries about its importance in education (for instance, Kessler 2000; Moffett 1994; Miller 2000; Ofsted, 1994; NCC, 1993; Palmer, 1998; SCAA, 1995), in Australia, most curriculum advisors and educators appear to have ignored it. Instead, it is the adolescent health professionals and youth and social workers that have recognised its role in promoting the wellbeing of young people. In such a context, I believe, there is a pressing need to explore a contemporary understanding of spirituality and its implications for education and learning.

Contemporary Understandings of the Nature of Spirituality: an Expression of Connectedness

For many years in the Western Christian world, spiritual expression was contained and managed within religious frameworks so that, in time, religion and spirituality came to be viewed as interchangeable, often with more emphasis being given to other aspects of the religious tradition. However, there is growing evidence that many writers and theorists who are speaking about spirituality today are no longer confined to the fields of theology and religion. Instead, contemporary literature from disciplines as diverse as psychology, sociology, neuroscience and biology have joined in the discussions of spirituality where some recognition is given to religion as one human construct which nurtures and gives expression to spirituality. The common element from these different fields suggest that spirituality is primordial (Hay & Hunt, 2000); an essential human trait that is relational (de Souza, 2003; 2004; Eckersley, 2004; Groome, 1998; Harris & Moran, 1998; Hay & Nye, 1998; Newberg, D'Aquili & Rause, 2001; Persinger, 1996; Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998; Tacey, 2000; 2003); and that expressions of spirituality are, perhaps, the result from the levels of connectedness that the human person has to Self and Other in the physical world, and to a Transcendent Other (de Souza, 2003; 2004). Newberg, D'Aquili & Rause (2001) claim that it is 'nothing more or less than an uplifting sense of genuine spiritual union with something larger than the self' (2001, p. 101) thereby highlighting the relational dimension. The term 'god spot' was used by Ramchandran (Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998) for a small area of the temporal lobe since there appeared to be increased activity in this part of the brain when a person discussed things of deep meaning and value. These findings, in turn, promoted research into the concept of spiritual intelligence (Emmons, 2000; Zohar & Marshall, 2000) which, while still somewhat controversial, raises pertinent questions about expressions of the relational dimension of the human person.

Significantly, a growing number of professionals in areas of mental health, youth and social work, and education both here and overseas, have been exploring this notion of spirituality as a means to helping young people find meaning and a sense of belonging (Commission on Children at Risk, 2003; de Souza, 2001; 2004; de Souza, Cartwright & McGilp, 2004; D'Souza, 2000; Kessler, 2000; Miller, 2000; Moffett, 1994; O'Connell, 1999; Palmer, 1990; Palmer, 1998; Wilber, 2000; 2001) and organising conferences around this theme (for instance, the Annual Suicide Prevention Conference, Brisbane, 2003; the Spirituality and Health Conference, Adelaide July 2005). As well, in different universities around Australia, courses in spirituality are being offered in disciplines related to health, politics, communication and analytical studies, and sociology.

One aspect that requires attention in relation to the nurturing of children's and young people's spirituality is the fact that in Australia, today, the traditional institutions that have nurtured human spirituality such as religious traditions, families and local communities have changed noticeably in their structure and importance, and their influence in the lives of many young people have seriously diminished

(de Souza, Cartwright & McGilp, 2004). Therefore, new structures and processes are required to nurture spirituality, and this is an area that educators and education should address because, firstly it is a crucial human trait and therefore requires nurturing and expression, and secondly, new knowledge and understandings have highlighted the interdependence of rational, emotional and spiritual intelligences (Goleman, 1995; Zohar & Marshall, 2000) which has implications for the learning process.

If human spirituality is innate and its expressions are relational, there are some implications for the design of learning environments and strategies in educational programs that will address and nurture this aspect of children's and adolescents' lives.

To this end, I propose a model with my student-teachers that evolved from an understanding of connectedness (See Figure 1).

It is drawn from theories of intellectual, emotional and spiritual intelligences (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000; Emmons, 2000; Zohar & Marshall, 2000) which correspond to cognitive, affective and inner reflective dimensions of learning. Further, it links cognitive, affective and inner-reflective abilities to the processes of thinking, feeling and intuiting in

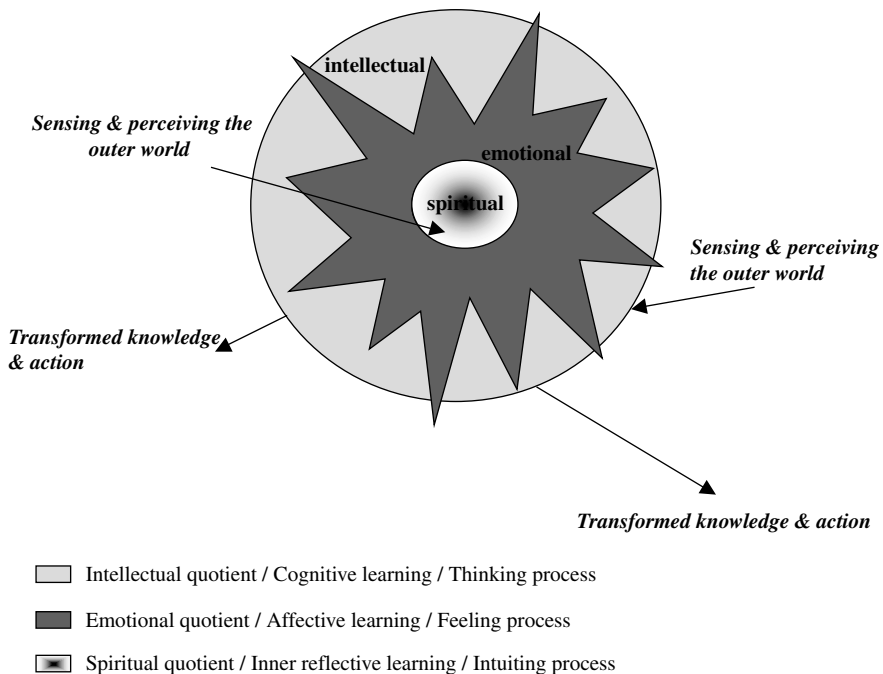


Figure 1. A model for transformational learning – perceiving/sensing, thinking, feeling, intuiting (de Souza, 2004a)

the learning process. Further, it recognises that all learning starts at the point of interface between the individual person and the world around them, that is the point of perception and/or the senses. This is discussed in more detail below.

A Learning Model that Promotes Connectedness

The centrality of the intellect in Western education has for a long time resulted in an undisputed focus on cognitive learning. Gardner's (1983; 1993; 1999) Multiple Intelligence theory also evolved from cognitive learning theory. It is only in the past decade that theories of Emotional Intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000; Goleman, 1995) and Spiritual Intelligence ((Emmons, 2000; Zohar & Marshall, 2000) have been articulated and investigated and it is argued by their supporters that they are imperative in helping the individual to live and function effectively as thinking, feeling and reflecting beings:

Neither IQ nor EQ, separately or in combination, is enough to explain the full complexity of human intelligence nor the vast richness of the human soul and imagination...We use SQ to wrestle with questions of good and evil and to envision unrealised possibilities—to dream, to aspire, to raise ourselves out of the mud (Zohar & Marshall, 2000) p.5.

While these theories have invited both support and criticism (R. Bar-On & J. D. A. Parker, 2000; Fontana, 2003, for instance,) they do provide a rationale to consider the development of learning programs that address the three aspects of being: rational (thinking), emotional (feeling) and spiritual (intuiting). Indeed, the framework for the learning model that I am proposing here recognises that both the outer world and the inner world of the individual are significant for learning and growth to maturity. Certainly, the emotions and intuitions are elemental to the inner world of the individual, allowing the individual to connect to (inner) Self. If education seeks to address the whole person, both the outer and the inner lives of the individual needs to be addressed and nurtured.

I will now turn to the elements that, I suggest, operate in the learning process, that is, the connections between rational thought which is linked to the process of thinking, the emotions which trigger feelings, and spirituality which draws on the unconscious mind to enable the individual to creatively and intuitively find solutions. This concept of the learning process supports Jung's theory that humans experience phenomena in four ways:

1. Perceiving the facts; that is, taken in through the senses.
2. Thinking about them logically.
3. Developing feelings which produce value judgements
4. Intuiting by looking beyond the facts to certain other possibilities (O'Connor, 1985; 1988, p. 75).

The integration of these four processes, perceiving, thinking, feeling and intuiting enables us to become familiar with both our inner and outer worlds. It raises the potential for the integration of learning which can become transformational. Without integration it is possible that learning may remain at a superficial or 'surface' learning level.

Whilst educational programs have usually focused, although with different levels of emphasis, on the thinking and feeling processes, the role of intuition has often been overlooked in traditional learning programs. Nevertheless, in more recent times its importance is being recognised. Again, a full discussion of intuition is beyond the scope of this paper but a few insights will be offered here.

A common understanding of intuitions is that they arise from tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1967) which is knowledge the individual has gained implicitly or through unconscious perceptions and which is stored in the unconscious mind (Claxton, 2000; Eraut, 2000). Therefore, individuals do not know they have this knowledge, nor do they do how they may have acquired it but when they face a situation that has echoes of a past experience, or they respond to stimuli that triggers an unconscious memory, their response becomes intuitive. It is that 'Aha' moment, that 'gut' feeling, that dawning of a realisation that we have found a solution to a problem, or made a decision that 'feels' right.

This is further clarified by O'Connor (1985; 1988) who draws on Jung to explain intuition as a result of unconscious perception which is different to sensation. While the latter is about perception through the senses by which we learn that something exists, intuition is the 'function that tells us of future possibilities. It is the proverbial hunch and the function that informs us about the atmosphere that surrounds an experience or event (p. 76–77). Del Prete (2002) claims that to activate and grow in our capacity to know the living dimensions of truth requires practice in an intuitive way of knowing, a way that has been largely ignored in Western society (p. 171). Drawing on a study by cognitive psychologist, Gary Klein, who investigated decision-making by fire fighters, Breen (2000) claims that

Intuition is really a matter of learning how to see—of looking for cues or patterns that ultimately show you what to do...[when] sensory perceptions detect subtle details...that would have been invisible to less-experienced fire fighters Breen (2000).

Returning then to the model of learning that I am proposing, it recognises that while students' learning is based on what they perceive through their senses, their initial response may be at the intellectual level (knowledge based) or the emotional level (feelings based). Either of these responses can lead to an integration of the two so that the intellect and the emotions work together to produce a higher and a deeper level of knowledge and engagement. However, it also recognises that unconscious perceptions continue through the process so that learning must go beyond the surface, it must touch the depth of being, that is the 'soul' of the student. It must reach that core where conscious learning merges with unconscious learning to become transformed, which may and should lead to

outward expressions of changed thinking and behaviour, the ultimate goal of education. It is at this level that intuiting becomes the third aspect of an integrated learning process so that the learner's response becomes transformed without her/him consciously knowing exactly how or why the change has occurred. The motion then is generative, moving from initial conscious and unconscious perceptions at the surface through thoughts and feelings that merge with previous unconscious learning and instincts at the centre before returning to the surface in transformed expressions.

To explain this process further, it is useful to show its applications in the teaching of a topic, for instance, war. The concept of war is a distant, unreal situation for many children in Victorian classrooms. However, many have experienced it vicariously through various media, most usually the television, and such experiences may have led to overexposure which can result in de-sensitisation to the topic. Nonetheless, their vicarious experiences may allow them to speak 'knowledgeably' about the topic but, perhaps dispassionately and with a certain level of assumed authority. Thus, one step towards transforming their knowledge and experience of the topic is to inject some feelings into the process. This can be done with the use of appropriate music, visual images, personal stories of victims told in the first person, and perhaps short poems or selected lines from newspaper reports and so on. Indeed, it may even be possible to use a resource that will engage students with their sense of smell, for instance, having some smoke associated with a small explosive like a fire cracker accompanied by sound like gunfire shots etc. Such a process will ensure that the student will engage with the stimuli through different senses thereby receiving both conscious and unconscious perceptions. With some, the visual image may focus their attention but the combination of the visuals with the music, scent and other sounds will create a different response from one that relies on the visuals alone. Certainly, the fact that music is evocative may easily be discerned from watching a dramatic moment in a film with and without the sound.

Thus, what proceeds from these activities are a range of different responses as students process the information from within their own particular experiences and contexts. Some of these responses may be drawn from forgotten memories or they may be intuitive as the student may have drawn on tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1967), that is, knowledge that they don't know they have. Good class discussion strategies are needed at this stage to capture these different responses which, in turn, may trigger further responses from other students. Obviously, in some classrooms there may be students who could draw on personal experience, either their own or of some member of their family. What is also essential through the process is the time taken for silent reflection or contemplation of a word or image which may assist in the process of information processing, thereby allowing students to accommodate the new learning. This could be followed by journal writing with or without music/sound where students consider their own thoughts and feelings. Having captured a certain amount of attention and, perhaps, interest, the lesson could progress to the particular war that is to be studied. The facts concerning

the reasons for, the progress and outcomes of the war should be studied with attention given to the feelings involved. Why did it happen? How did the respective parties feel about it—politicians, person in the street, different countries, friends and enemies? Did their attitudes and feelings change over the progress of the war? And so on.

The facts that need to be learned can be researched and written up and presented in a variety of ways. Traditional methods involving research assignments, prepared talks, debates and so on, are useful. However, alternative avenues should be explored such as composing rap songs, antiphonal chants, scripted drama, dance drama (exaggerated action to music with accompanying signs as appropriate), or different kind of games, including board game. If different groups research different aspects, the presentation and performance activities could be used to present the content which becomes the assessment task, as also, they could be used for each group to 'teach' their particular topic to the rest of the group. This could be done with interactive question and answers at the end of a presentation or performance, or with each group playing another group's board game and taking notes on the learning. And so on. It is important to remember that assessment should be based on the demonstration of the knowledge component of the topic and not on the drama or art skills used in the presentation. The latter have just been used as an engaging vehicle for the promotion and retention of knowledge. Ultimately, students should review their own learning, not just the knowledge of the topic but also any wisdom they may have gained about the concept of war.

The process described above, then, has involved the perceiving, thinking, feeling and intuiting elements, each contributing to an integration of deep transformative learning around the topic since they engaged the senses of the student, allowed time for inner reflection, communicating, exploring the feelings provoked, and ultimately, absorbing new information and knowledge about the topic. Such a process may have helped students connect with the topic in a meaningful way, reflect on their own views of war and if these have changed as a result of the new learning, and perhaps, consider the wisdom they may have gained which may have transformed them in some way.

In order to apply this learning model, teachers need to be willing to look beyond the achievement of knowledge that remains at the surface level. They need to become aware of and recognise the role of the feelings and intuition in the learning process. One way to do this is to articulate three kinds of learning outcomes: cognitive, affective and spiritual. While cognitive outcomes are articulated as specific learning that will be demonstrated at the end of a unit of work and therefore, can be assessable, the affective and spiritual learning outcomes are 'hoped' for learning and may not always be evident in the immediate future. In the case of spiritual learning, the hope is that a shift will take place at a depth level, the 'soul' of the student, so that there will be a corresponding change in thinking and behaviour pattern. It is quite possible that this may only happen after a period of time. Nonetheless, it should be planned for so that opportunities for the student to develop this aspect of the learning are offered.

Accordingly, a cognitive learning outcome may state:

By the end of the lesson students will define, describe, recall, recognise, illustrate, demonstrate, construct, report, analyse, evaluate, synthesise, debate, sketch and so on.

N.B. These outcomes require a product by the end of the lesson and may be assessed. The affective learning outcome may state:

By the end of the lesson opportunities will be provided for students to show awareness of, experience, accept, appreciate, display interest, participate, reflect, create, seek, enjoy, show tolerance, persevere, and so on.

Finally, the spiritual learning outcome may state:

By the end of the lesson opportunities will be provided for students to develop a sensitivity to, empathise with, develop compassion, be self-reflective, accept responsibility, contemplate, meditate, volunteer, show commitment to, display awe or wonder, experience oneness with nature, express concern, share with another, become deeply involved, immerse themselves (in artwork), show consideration for, feel connected to and so on.

The verbs used are significant since they suggest the dimension of learning being considered.

The reasons for including statements about affective and spiritual learning despite the fact that they may not be demonstrable within the space of the lesson or, indeed, measured, are to ensure that the teacher will keep these aspects of learning in mind as they plan and teach the lesson. This reduces the chance that the activities may remain at the cognitive level, or produce surface learning which concentrates on plenty of tasks for busyness and classroom control.

This model also challenges the teacher to find new ways to communicate the content in order to seriously engage their students. Using learning strategies that challenge and engage students who may be at different levels of knowledge and experience is vital and they call for the use of excellent resources and appropriate periods of time. For instance, time is needed for discussion and sharing of ideas at group and class levels followed by time for contemplation and reflection. Students need to develop skills that allow them to see through the eyes of another, and to walk in their shoes which could be achieved through various forms of play, improvisation and other drama activities and with an effective use of poetry and literature, art works, film, and music. This may mean designing learning environments that allow this to happen.

Ultimately, if schools use a foundation for their curriculum which recognises the the relational dimension of the individual and the inter-relatedness of the intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions in education, they will provide a framework within which the values mentioned earlier can be recognised as expressions of the

individual's connectedness to Self and Other in the communal, social, physical and non-physical world. Thereby, a rationale is provided for the selection and authentication of these values which raises the potential for students to connect with and reflect on the content at their own levels and to connect with the Other in their own classrooms.

A final word, if educators wish to follow a path that allows them to nurture the spirituality in terms of the connectedness of young people, and to help them find meaning and purpose in their lives, they need to recognise that such a quest requires more than individuals working to achieve this within their own classrooms. Educational policies need to change and whole school involvement needs to occur. The relational aspect of young people's lives should be recognised as a vital aspect of their spiritual, emotional and therefore, intellectual wellbeing, therefore:

- schools should revisit their learning environments and offerings to discover their effectiveness in addressing both the outer and inner lives of their students which promote a sense of connectedness, trust and hope;
- time and space should be included in the daily or weekly timetable that allows for silence, solitude and contemplation in surroundings that inspire peace and a sense of mystery;
- resources should be selected which students can access and engage with at different sensory points which may trigger different nuances and dynamics in the learning process;
- learning activities should promote reflection, imagination and creativity, and a response to beauty and creation;
- students should be encouraged to accept responsibility for themselves and others, to develop empathy and compassion, and to commit to action for the common good;
- school assemblies and other occasions when the school community comes together should focus on the celebration of the stories of the individuals and community, and on experiences that promote joyfulness, magic, awe and wonder.

Only then may educational programs offer their students increased opportunities to know and be themselves, to find a place in their communities and to find some meaning and purpose in their lives.

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A QUR'ANIC APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF 'LIVING TOGETHER': TA'ARUF

Prof. Dr. Mualla Selçuk

School of Divinity, Ankara University

Introduction

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things) (Qur'an 49:13)*.

In her article, called 'Avrupa'ya Bir Ruh Vermek, Anadolu'dan Bir Müslüman Kadın' (Giving a soul to Europe, A Muslim Woman from Anatolia), Professor Beyza Bilgin (1998) says:

When people see one another as strangers they can easily think that those who do not belong to their Faith might deserve going to Hell, or they can easily think of cleansing them from the world. However, when they start knowing each other and becoming friends their thoughts and behaviors change. Perhaps they could first think: 'he/she is a human being as everyone of us, he/she also deserves to have guidance and to enter Paradise; I may be able to help and mediate for this to happen'. But when they realise that the same thought exists mutually in both sides, they feel surprised'. What should they do now? Should they stop contacting each other and re-alienate one another? Should they ignore each other? Or should they, rather, realise that they are different people who strive to reach the same destination from different ways, and thus, having respect for one another? (p. 46).

Bilgin gives an example about how children belonging to different Faiths and cultures in Germany express their concerns: 'the number of children who speak in the following manner after returning to their houses [from the school] is not so small: 'Mum! Hans, my friend, is Christian. So will he go to Hell? But he is a very

nice person. I do not want to see him going to Hell', or 'Mehmet is Muslim, is this a reason why he will go to Hell? But he is a very nice person. He should not be punished because of his religion!' (Bilgin, 1998, p. 46).

This paper will put forward an analysis of a Qur'anic concept, Ta'aruf, from the viewpoint of religious education in order to negate the inter-religious prejudices and contribute to tolerance and understanding between different Faiths and cultures. The main source of Islam as religion is the Qur'an and, thus, any major work of religious education in Islam may take its roots from the Qur'an. But I would like to make a few points about how the role of the Qur'an is understood in Muslim tradition. There have been important questions in this context that need to be addressed.

The information value of the Qur'an, the binding authority of the Qur'an for the Muslims and its influence upon Muslims' individual and social lives, its contribution to humanity in addressing the challenges of modern times are some main points that engage the attention of Muslim intellectuals. There are two major points of view among Muslim intellectuals with respect to the issues mentioned. One point of view is that since the Qur'an is the word of God it is absolute, universal and is not time-bound. For example, according to this viewpoint, legal rulings of the Qur'an are fixed forever, and cannot be re-interpreted. The other point of view is that the Qur'an is the word of God but it also records the cultures and practices of the Prophet and of Arab society of the time when it was revealed. For example, in this viewpoint, the political, military and legal arrangements in the Qur'an are firstly related to the needs of the society that it directly addresses in history. Thus, such arrangements could be re-interpreted in different times and conditions in order to adapt to the changing needs of Muslim society at different times (Albayrak, 2002, p. 227–228). Of the two viewpoints, I see the latter more appealing for studies of religious education in Islam.

In fact, this second line of approach differentiates what is essentially religious and what is a part of historical tradition; and sheds light upon a liberal understanding of religion and tradition, which has always existed at differing levels in the history of Muslims. Thus, we invite our students in our Faculty of Divinity, in Ankara, to develop critical thinking during their studies and enrich their religious perspective by paying attention to comparative religious studies and analyses. We believe that a broad approach to religion will contribute to the development of an inclusive understanding that since every human person is created by God, everyone is worthy of respect. We believe that the main goal in our effort of promoting this liberal and broad approach to the study of religion and culture will help students to advance 'their self-consciousness as individuals through their broad knowledge of the Qur'an and will enable them to manage problems which they may face in the practice of their life'.

Before proceeding into the discussion on the concept of Ta'aruf, I would like to mention the Qur'anic bases of a religious education which can provide ground for the development of further individual consciousness and pluralistic interpretation of issues related to religion and culture. It is certain that if absolutism in any kind of interpretation in religious or non-religious issues is used in education it will sharply

hinder the development of individual consciousness. If absolutism is employed in religious education this can lead to an understanding of religious texts without the broad context of history and society and to a memorisation of religious rules as mere commands or prohibitions without analysing and rationally understanding them. Such a negative approach eventually deprives the individuals of the opportunity to be creative in understanding and re-establishing themselves (Aydın, 1996, p. 168).

Qur'anic Bases of A Religious Education which Contributes to Individual Consciousness

Islam addresses human beings on the basis of reason and freedom. Qur'anic language and perspective offer the right to free choice based on free will. The Qur'an says 'there is no compulsion in religion' (Qur'an 2:256). In line with this Qur'anic approach, Shatibi (d. 790 A.H./1388 C.E.) says: 'The real aim of religion is to free human beings from the level of compulsory servitude to God and elevate him/her to the level of choosing to obey God by his/her own free will' (Shatibi, p. 168). Surely, the scope of Shatibi's point of obeying God by a free will goes beyond the basic rituals in Islam and covers many different aspects of personal and social life. In fact the significance of religious rituals rests in a sense in their positive contribution to the quality of life (see Qur'an: chapter of Maun).

The Holy Qur'an does not praise the behaviors that are not based on the free will. The Qur'an shows the ways of obtaining knowledge before deciding to act in practice, as knowledge is necessary to find the right way and the right option.

We are also responsible for testing the reliability of what we hear or what we see; the Qur'an says: 'And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge; for every act of hearing or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning)' (Qur'an 17:36). The Qur'an also encourages us to listen to each other without prejudice, and follow the path of knowledge, as it says: 'Those who listen to the Word and follow the best (meaning) in it: those are the ones whom Allah has guided and those are the ones endued with understanding' (Qur'an 39:18), and 'but why dispute ye in matters of which ye have no knowledge?' (Qur'an 3:66). The Qur'an also says: 'Nay they charge with falsehood that whose knowledge they cannot compass even before the elucidation thereof hath reached them' (Qur'an 10:39). The Qur'an attaches great significance to the use of human capacity of thinking and the use of reason before making a choice or decision. The Qur'an says, 'Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an or are their hearts locked up by them?' (Qur'an 47:24). Among them are some who (pretend to) listen to thee: but canst thou make the deaf to hear even though they are without understanding? And among them are some who look at thee: but can't thou guide the blind even though they will not see? (Qur'an 10:42-43).

In Islam, even the Prophet Muhammad is not given the authority to compel a non-believer to become a Muslim, as the Qur'an says 'thy duty is to (make the Message) reach them: it is Our part to call them to account' (Qur'an 13:40);

'Therefore do thou give admonition for thou art one to admonish. Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs' (Qur'an 88:21–22); We know best what they say; and thou art not one to ever awe them by force. So admonish with the Qur'an such as fear My Warning!' (Qur'an 50:45). 'It is true thou wilt not be able to guide everyone whom thou lovest: but Allah guides those whom He will and He knows best those who receive guidance (Qur'an 28:56.). 'If thy Lord had so willed He could have made mankind one People' (Qur'an 11:118).

According to the Qur'an, the duty of the Prophet is to offer the truth to the people in a plain way (Qur'an 5:92, 99; Qur'an 16:35–82; Qur'an 24:54; Qur'an 29:18; Qur'an 42:48). The Qur'an shows the aim of revelation as guidance to the right path and showing the difference between the right and wrong path. By doing so, the Qur'an leaves the individual free to choose his/her own path, though it holds him/her responsible for the results of the choice made by his/her free will. The Qur'an says: 'And shown him the two highways?' (Qur'an 90:10); 'We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will) (Qur'an 76:3.); 'This is the Book; in it is guidance sure without doubt to those who fear Allah' (Qur'an 2:2); 'Say 'The Truth is from your Lord': let him who will believe and let him who will reject (it)...' (Qur'an 18:29); 'Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds' (Qur'an 74:38).

The Qur'an presents the freedom of human beings in their actions as subject to the limits in accordance to the aim of their creation by God. Human beings are expected to fulfill their role of being useful to themselves and also contribute to the world they live in. The human being, to put it in a Qur'anic term, 'has undertaken the amanah/Trust/responsibility'. Amanah is described as a heavy responsibility to the extent that no other creature—other than a human being—could dare to accept. The Qur'an says: 'We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains: but they refused to undertake it being afraid thereof: but man undertook it he was indeed unjust and foolish' (Qur'an 33:72). The life is, in a sense, the challenge of taking the amanah/Trust. To fulfill this responsibility that the Qur'an describes, the human person is equipped by capacities of reason, free will, understanding, etc.

The Qur'an says: 'By the Soul and the proportion and order given to it; And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right; Truly he succeeds that purifies it; And he fails that corrupts it' (Qur'an 91:7–10).

Freedom matters only when there is the chance and capacity to choose. As the above-mentioned Qur'anic verses put forward, the human person has the capacity to differentiate between right and wrong and to choose by a free will. The Qur'an says (Qur'an 92:4–10):

Verily (the ends) ye strive for are diverse; So he who gives (in charity) and fears (Allah); And (in all sincerity) testifies to the Best; We will indeed make smooth for him the path to Bliss; But he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient; And gives the lie to the Best; We will indeed make smooth for him the Path to Misery.

Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls) (Qur'an 13:11).

... Allah will never change the grace which He hath bestowed on a people until they change what is in their (own) souls... (Qur'an 8:53).

The Qur'an reminds the human person of his/her self-responsibility and accounting for his/her actions; as it says: That man can have nothing but what he strives for; That (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight (Qur'an 53:39); The Qur'an criticises those who do not follow moral values in their actions, as it says: 'They are like cattle nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning)' (Qur'an 7:179).

According to the Qur'an, human beings are bound by an eternal agreement of being obedient to God. This point is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows (Qur'an 7:172–173):

When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam from their loins their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves (saying): 'Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?' They said: 'Yea! we do testify!' (This) lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: 'of this we were never mindful.' 'Or lest ye should say: 'Our fathers before us may have taken false gods but we are (their) descendants after them: wilt thou then destroy us because of the deeds of men who were futile?'

The above mentioned statements of the Qur'an plainly put forward that human beings are under the responsibility of recognising the authority of God as their own choice, and they are warned against the risk of blindly following the wrong choices of the previous generations in their Faiths.

The Qur'anic concept of amanah/Trust may lead us to reach separate criteria concerning religious education: one that is uniting and the other that is liberating. Students may share the idea that amanah/Trust is the responsibility of everyone, and, on the other hand, each student may develop his/her individual consciousness and liberate his/her own personal capacity in playing a positive role to fulfill his duty concerning amanah/Trust. A positive and lasting contribution of a human being to his/her personal world, to the society and the world he/she lives in is considered very essential in terms of religious education. The Qur'an describes the lasting effect of good, and the temporary and misleading image of evil as follows (Qur'an 14:24–26):

Seest thou not how Allah sets forth a parable? a goodly Word like a goodly tree whose root is firmly fixed and its branches (reach) to the heavens; It brings forth its fruit at all times by the leave of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men in order that they may receive admonition; And the parable of an evil Word is that of an evil tree. It is torn up by the root from the surface of the earth: it has no stability.

Human Beings are Created in Differing Individual and Social Identities in Order to Know Each Other Via Understanding Their Differences: Ta'aruf (Knowing Each Other)

I would like to interpret the term Ta'aruf in the sense of how the Qur'an sees 'the other' in relation to the issue of 'co-existence' which is popular in modern times since there are problems around the world caused by intolerance between different social identities. Thus, learning how to live together with the 'other' or 'the others' is significant. A positive approach to the terms of pluralism, dialogue, diversity, equality is essential for peace and co-existence between people of different social identities. The concept of Ta'aruf put forward by the Qur'an in the chapter of Hujurat is particularly relevant to the issue under discussion and is elaborated below. The full translation of the Qur'anic verse, in hand, which will be the focus of the remaining part of this speech reads (Qur'an, 49:13):

'O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).'

'A-r-f' as the root form of Ta'aruf, the key word presented by the aforementioned Qur'anic verse, means 'to know, to recognise, to explore'; but when 'a-r-f' is used in the form of 'ta-'a-ruf' the meaning of the word becomes 'to know/recognise/understand each other. This encourages a partnership role between different people in knowing each other and sharing the knowledge and recognition of each other, and this, in a sense, leads to a culture of pluralism and tolerance in societies (see Öztürk, 1998, p.570).

An interpretation of the Qur'anic verse promoting 'ta'aruf' with regard to historical Islamic context may be put forward as 'O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other' (Esed, 1998, p. 854). This means that each person is created by the same formula; that human persons are equal in terms of their biological procedure of creation; and that human persons are equal in terms of their social value, since their equality in the process of creation is essential. As well, the social affiliations and identities which are gained later are provided as different ways or channels of knowledge and cultures in order to make them know each other and find better ways of communication and cooperation with one another for the good of everyone. In line with the idea of equality and pluralism, the concept of 'ta'aruf' requires the condemnation of all prejudices based on the basis of tribalism or racism since the main point is the equality and pluralism in human society.

The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have warned against the idea of superiority of a particular tribe by saying that 'everyone is from Adam and Adam is from clay' i.e. no one has any reason for claiming superiority against another, and everyone is equal as the process of creation proves. The following part of the Qur'anic verse

promoting 'ta'aruf' is, in fact, a conclusion of the earlier parts of the same verse in terms of equality and pluralism (Qur'an 49:13):

Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

As generally the exegetes of the Qur'an offers the conclusion that the differences between different peoples can only prove the richness of God's creation; some like Elmalili Hamdi Yazir, add that the differences between human beings, in fact, provide good ways for people to compete with each other and promoting good and providing solidarity amongst themselves (Yazir, 1979, p. 4478).

It is imperative to promote mutual respect and recognition of one another, and support pluralism and tolerance in our world of humanity; in line with the Qur'anic concept of 'ta'aruf', it is necessary to work against prejudices and ignorance. Ibn Ashur (Ibn Aşur, p. 260–261) in his interpretation 'ta'aruf' goes beyond the idea of recognition of 'the others' and adds that the idea of 'ta'aruf' should ensure that mutual understanding and mutual respect between different people prevail. Also, there are interpretations of 'ta'aruf' which see that a spiritual element of peace and understanding of each other is essentially inherent by the very nature or creation of human beings (fitrah), and thus, the Qur'anic concept of 'ta'aruf' should mean human beings shall follow the requirement of their nature, that is to be in peaceful terms with respect for each other (Kutub, 1980, p. 9333–9334).

In conclusion of our understanding of the Qur'anic concept of 'ta'aruf', we may see that:

1. Human beings are created from one and the same source; thus everyone is essentially equal.
2. That every human person has different qualities is God's grace, which enables everyone to enrich the humanity with his/her difference.

Promoting equality and pluralism is a particularly significant task to which the students in the field of religious education should pay attention, since religious education which has a particular focus on the issue of equality and pluralism, mutual respect and solidarity between peoples of different faiths and cultures can contribute immensely to the prevalence of peace and co-existence in our world.

(*) All translations of the Qur'anic verses mentioned in English throughout the text of this paper are taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation of the Qur'an.

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TRANSFORMING SELF AND SUBJECT: TOWARD AN INTEGRATIVE SPIRITUAL PEDAGOGY

Tobin Hart, Ph.D.

University of West Georgia

Introduction

Our lives are full of moments when we have a choice between going a little deeper or moving on to the next item, person, or task. When we eat a morsel of food, how much do we allow the taste and texture to wrap around our tongue before bringing in the next mouthful? When an idea or feeling (or a person) comes before us, in which moments do we open to it, and in which do we let it pass by? In the times when we do go a little deeper, experience is not measured by quantity but is, instead, perceived as quality or intensity. Both experiences have value but our lives are most significantly shaped by the intensities, the moments of greater depth. Entering into depth involves an opening or expansion of consciousness and connection, fundamental characteristics of spiritual knowing (Hart, Nelson, Puhakka, 2000). Through such an opening we travel past points of certainty and meet both the world and ourselves in fresh ways.

Education is no different; the opportunity to open more deeply is always present. In contemporary practice, too often curricular expectations, looming standardised tests, a modernist approach to pedagogy and general anxiety push us toward *moving on* rather than *moving into*. On the educational surface lives information and there is often a tendency to skim along at this level and accumulate what we can, assuming this to be the goal. But elevating information acquisition to the goal of education glazes the surface of learning and obscures information's potential as a portal into depth, presence, intensity, and spirituality. When we dive in a little deeper, subject and Self open and both have the potential to be transformed.

A pedagogy of depth involves a consideration of inner significances as well as outer concerns. It does not require that more information be added to the contemporary curriculum, but invites us to the inside of the subject matter, the other and the Self. This is a curriculum where the largest questions sit alongside the smallest, and all are fair game.

Suggesting a spiritual approach to education does not necessitate additional content or a religious curriculum. Even within a religious curriculum, it is not necessarily the information exchanged that determines whether this has been a spiritual encounter but instead the quality of that exploration. Jesus or Buddha, history or biology can quickly become either another commodity for a banking model of education or a living subject. A religious text or biology text becomes spiritual sustenance depending on the quality of meeting, the depth of engagement. If we are attending only to the surface of facts and factoids information has little chance of resonating down to our soul. On the other hand, even the most seemingly two dimensional content, the definition of a word, for example, comes to life and in turn brings *us* to life if we can encounter it deeply, perhaps through finding the beauty of its written form, the history of its origin, the phenomenology inherent in its etymology, the relevance of the word in one's life today. Like life itself, these subjects are living words, living subjects that are encrypted. The code is broken and the subject revealed only to the degree that we open to them.

The Spiritual Child

Emphasising the depths of subject and Self leads to questions about the inner life and capacities of the student. If we are to open to students' inner life as well as that of the subject, will we find something that will serve spiritual growth? Is there a spiritual consciousness to be drawn out?

There has been a long dominant assumption that children are amoral or even immoral, they do not have capacity for spiritual considerations or experience and therefore religious, character or spiritual education must shape or mould virtue from the outside in (see e.g., Goldman, 1964; Wilber, 1996). However, children's spirituality may exist apart from adult rational and linguistic conceptions and knowledge about a religion. While they may not be able to articulate a moment of wonder or conceptualise a religious concept, their presence, which is their mode of being and knowing in the world, may be distinctly spiritual. As Gordon Allport (1955) suggested, 'the religion of childhood may be of a very special order' (p. 101). There is growing evidence that children have a rich and remarkable spiritual life (e.g., Armstrong, 1985; Hart, 2003, 2004a; Hay and Nye, 1998; Hoffman, 1992; Piechowski, 2001; Robinson, 1983).

The challenge for education that attends to character, whether in a secular or a religious setting, is to find a balance between drawing out the organic spiritual character, capacities, and compassion from within the child while offering our view of the 'good life' from the outside in. There is not space here to engage in this discussion of children's innate spiritual presence, but the presupposition held in this chapter, based on growing evidence, is that children do have a rich and formative spiritual life, one that needs to be included as we consider educational goals and practices. These capacities often serve as a powerful wellspring for wisdom and wonder, calling and compassion (Hart, 2003, 2004a).

The critical implication for education is that the task of spiritually oriented education is to engage and draw out these potentials as much as it is providing students with knowledge and skills, religious or otherwise. The focus in this chapter is on an integrative pedagogy of depth that draws out subject and Self, including those innate capacities. This is an invitation for the process of education to become a wisdom tradition itself.

What follows will be a very brief sketch of some contours of that depth. It suggests a direction for teaching and learning in any moment. The six layers that follow might be used as a goal in curriculum design or as a self-assessment to determine how well the subject and the Self were plumbed.

In this map, *information* is given its rightful place as currency for the educational exchange. Information can then open up into *knowledge*, where direct experience often brings together the bits of information into patterned wholes involving mastery and skill. Knowledge then opens the possibility of cultivating *intelligence*, which can cut, shape, and create information and involves a dialectic of the intuitive and the analytic. This is followed by the layer of *understanding* that takes us beyond the power of intelligence to see through the eye of the heart. Understanding, then, contrasts and balances objectivism and offers a way of knowing that serves character and community. Education then has the possibility for cultivating *wisdom*, which sees from a greater height and blends insight into what is true with an ethic of what is right. Finally the depths lead to the possibility of creative *transformation* changing both the known and the knower and generating new information to be explored.

This learning process might be thought of as microgenetic development, meaning the series of developmental changes that occur even in a single thought, feeling, or lesson. Microgenetic development differs from the development of the individual over time (ontogenetic). It is a process that can happen in an instant or over the course of an assignment or exercise and does so through epistemic shifts, that is, expanded ways of knowing. In fact, each level represents an expansion of knowing which in turn reveals more of the subject.

It may be easier to recognise the spiritual nature of the deeper dimensions that will be mentioned, such as understanding or wisdom, but it is also the whole movement toward depth, transcendence and integration that embodies the spiritual impulse. What follows will necessarily be very brief; for further explication see Hart (2001a).

The Currency of Information

This is the golden (or maybe the silicon) age of information. Information abounds like never before and each time we look, the amount available seems to have grown exponentially. We have access to everything from pipe bombs to prophecy. We no longer need priest, permission, or professor to gain access to the mysteries; they are available in the bookstore or with a click of the mouse. Not so long ago we may have been killed for possessing, or even mentioning the secrets but today there is

such a remarkable access to information that we may even begin to wonder if the world wide web is becoming the world wide mind—the collective unconscious of the planet in digital form (see Gackenbach, 1998). Computer technology and the internet represent the ‘second coming’ in information access, the first being Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press in the fifteen century. Both have precisely the same effect of providing access to more ideas more directly. But what are the implications for education?

Education gathers around information but amidst a deluge of information what is the appropriate function of information for the educational endeavor and how should teachers and students hold and handle it? How does the silicon or the ink get alchemised into the gold of knowledge and more?

Information involves discrete facts and skills. Information includes the average temperature in London, the correct spelling of a word, the chemical formula for salt. It is the currency of education and will remain so. Most of educational debate orbits around which and how much information should be passed along, and how well are we doing at it. Up to a point this is reasonable. It is certainly appropriate to share information and develop basic skills. As Aristotle says: ‘It is clear that children should be instructed in some useful things, for example, in reading and writing, not only for their own usefulness but also because many other sorts of knowledge are acquired through them’ (in Baskin, 1966, p. 8). However, we miss the forest for the twigs if this is our exclusive focus. What has happened is that the currency for learning, information, becomes the goal in and of itself; the dominant motif is one of acquisition.

Plato (cited in Baskin, 1966) tells us that when we focus on mere acquisition, we create ‘imitators’ (p. 544), instead of artists. Whitehead (1967) says that ‘a merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God’s earth’ (p. 1). Even at the University level he notes the consequence of reproducing mere imitators: ‘I have been much struck by the paralysis of thought induced in pupils by the aimless accumulation of precise knowledge, inert and unutilised’ (p. 37). The task of education is, in part, to help children think and act well, not to teach them what to think. However, in a climate dominated by acquisition, the organic and intuitive process of learning can get reduced to a linear downloading of discrete, often out-of-context content. Too often there is no time for the appreciation of and attention to value and meaning. This downloading is serious business and so learning to play with the information becomes a distraction from the curricular goal. The result is demotivation, and a loss of wonder and curiosity. Relevance and resonance are necessary to enliven and deepen the learning process.

Relevance implies that an idea or topic relates to us or something we are close to. If we find interest or meaning (relevance) in something, we pay attention and tend to learn it. Few things are more straightforward in life. Interest enables the three year old to know the names of dinosaurs, including which ones eat meat. It allows the child who struggles with simple mathematics to be able to interpret and memorise baseball statistics; children who have trouble with basic written language skills have little difficulty memorising and writing the words to popular songs.

Interest means that emotions have been engaged and we know that cognition and emotion are interdependent. Emotion activates attention which drives learning and memory.

Resonance literally implies that something vibrates us. Challenge, curiosity, rich sensory experience, and juicy information wake us up, thereby producing an echo or resonance within us. As with art, it is not just the superficial outline, contours, or the shape of the information; 'there is something additional, a breath that draws your breath into its breathing, a heartbeat that pounds on yours'.

The source for resonant exchange is the information and its particular form of presentation). Superficially presented information or information out of context is less likely to resonate within us. As Emerson says: 'Nothing interests us which is stark or bounded, but only what streams with life' (cited in Sealts, 1992, p. 246). Great teachers know their subject deeply enough to bring forth its presence and vitality; its streaming life.

Mastering the Puzzle of Knowledge

Knowledge involves the comprehension of systems of information instead of simply discrete pieces. Having knowledge means holding together the puzzle of information and implies the basic ability to use information. At the deep end there may be comprehension and mastery over a domain or skill. The debater can make a reasoned and measured argument, the mechanic diagnoses the car problem, the writer shapes a story. Whereas acquisition is the motif when information is seen as the goal, mastery, in the form of skill or comprehension, is the high water mark of knowledge.

Beyond commonly understood meanings of knowledge as systems of information (e.g., taxonomy of plants) and as ability (e.g., applying a mathematical formula) it may also be thought of as a process of valuing; this meaning is subtler. As fallout from the quest for scientific absolutes, knowledge is often understood to be independent from values and valuing, thus remaining 'pure,' 'scientific,' and 'true.' However, gaining knowledge is ultimately entwined with valuing. That which we select to remember or master and the way in which we view it is done so in a way that involves valuing. The chef filets the fish in one style over another because he or she has placed a higher priority on an outcome, for example, speed, or safety, or visual or gustatory aesthetics. When we gain knowledge we co-construct content and worth through our presuppositions, perceptual filters, and our intention. So knowledge, rather than being simply a static, abstract entity, is laden with value and is also in flux; it is an 'undivided whole in flowing movement' (Bohm, 1981, p. 9). The implication is that attention to the subjective process of valuing is integral to the development of knowledge and begins an opening to self-awareness and experimentation with values in general. Bohm contends that the fragmentation of knowledge and the separation of knowledge from values has 'helped to lead not only to a dangerously irresponsible use of knowledge, especially scientific, but even more to a general loss of meaning in life as a whole (p. 8).

Perhaps the most universal way of moving information into the pattern wholes of knowledge is through offering material in the ways that we live and understand our lives: through stories and metaphors. Stories and metaphors offer patterns of meaning that may be interpreted at many different levels. They weave bits and pieces into patterned wholes located in time, space, with history and direction, just like our lives. Whether a story is of a biological cell, a metaphysical idea, or an historic event, it connects ideas and events into the stream of life. Inevitably we act according to our stories (e.g., 'I am a good student.' 'The world is round.'). This learning is most actively engaged in the power of community, where we test out our stories in dialogue with others.

To move information toward knowledge, and activity toward mastery, ideas need to be encountered, played with, and used; 'ideas which are not utilized are positively harmful. By utilizing an idea, I mean relating it to that stream, compounded of sense perceptions, feelings, hopes, desires, and of mental activities adjusting thought to thought, which forms our life' (Whitehead, 1967, p. 3). Not just what we encounter but the way we encounter it is crucial as the valuing process, like skill or comprehension, grows from encounter. Swedenborg (in Blackmer, 1991, p. xxv) suggested that through this active engagement we grow or 'make soul.' First-hand knowledge or making contact (Hart, 1997) is at the heart of engagement. Whitehead (1967) writes: 'The second-handedness of the learned world is the secret of its mediocrity (p. 51).... If you want to understand anything, make it yourself (p. 53).... Education must pass beyond the passive reception of the ideas of others' (p. 47). A long tradition of educators have recognised and advocated the active engagement that develops mastery of knowledge (e.g., Rousseau, 1957; Pestalozzi's, 1951; Dewey, 1963; Freire, 1974).

The Power of Intelligence

Intelligence involves the ability to both use information and knowledge, and to create it; intelligence shapes and creates knowledge. It cuts with the knife of analytic thought and reconstructs through creative synthesis and imagination. The capacity for critical examination and evaluation open up closed systems of knowledge; knowledge and information can be taken out of context, recontextualised and can be manipulated for one's own uses. As Krishnamurti (1974) says 'intelligence uses knowledge' (p. 29) and this involves the capacity to think clearly. In intelligence, judgment overtakes mere opinion, and multiple perspectives emerge as the world is perceived more fully. Rather than seeing either/or binaries, intelligence sees the multiplicity of the world, 'either, or, or, or' endlessly along with immeasurable combinations and relationships.

The Greek philosophers distinguished between 'the fact that' and 'the reason why' (Gray, 1968, p. 17). While knowledge and information deal with 'the fact that,' intelligence can take up 'the reason why.' And in this way intelligence is about the way knowledge is held and handled. This is the 'art of the utilisation of

knowledge' (Whitehead, 1967, p. 6). Training for intelligence involves cultivating thinking rather than mandating what to think.

As part of training for intelligence there is a shift from accepting and amassing answers, as is more typical at the levels of information and knowledge, to challenging problems through asking questions. In contemporary schooling

Neither teachers nor students are willing to undertake 'risks for understanding'; instead, they content themselves with safer 'correct answer compromises.' Under such compromises... [education is considered] a success if students are able to provide answers that have been sanctioned as correct (Gardner, 1991, p. 150).

Gardner (1991) summarises several experiments, from physics to the humanities, in which even high achievers are unable to apply and perform outside a limited classroom context and instead fall back on mental explanations and strategies that were established in preschool years. While the volume of information accumulated was impressive, their intelligence did not grow sufficiently to use the information in working on an unfamiliar task.

Undergirding intelligence is the activity of knowing. Rather than emphasise various forms in which intelligence emerges (mathematical, spacial, etc.) as Gardner (1983) has been so influential in doing, the focus here is on the aspects of knowing that are common across all of them. Once knowing is freed, it is able to express itself in infinite variety of integrated 'intelligences.'

The activity of intelligence can be fostered through (at least) three general functions:

The skills of rational-empiricism, the development of logics and questioning, and the self-reflection of phenomenology (see Hart, 1998, 2001a, for an elaboration of these dimensions).

While often equated with a purity of linear logic, the activity of intelligence is multifaceted and operates as dialectic of the intuitive and the analytic (Hart, 1998). The mind reveals quantum leaps in pattern recognition, creative synthesis, and understanding that cannot be explained by linear processing. By itself linear, sequential logic reveals only a partial view. As William James (1909) declares: 'The one thing it [sequential logic] cannot do is to reveal the nature of things' (p. 252). The conscious aims of education can include the cultivation of both sides of this dialectic.

We grow intelligence when we move beyond seeing the goal as the simple regurgitation of facts, and even mastering knowledge. Of equal importance to the number of correct spelling words or facts repeated for the test, is how the student is learning to use their mind to unfold their potential for concentration, creative expression, precise analysis, intuitive insight, and also (as we will see in the next sections) for love and wisdom.

Intelligence is not the apex of human development, in fact, intelligence by itself can enable brutality. Krishnamurti (1974) tells us, 'You have to be educated so that you become a really beautiful, healthy, sane, rational human being, not a brutal

man with a clever brain who can argue and defend his brutality' (p. 62). Avoiding brutality involves spiraling inward toward self-knowledge and toward the heart of understanding.

The Heart of Understanding

The origin of the word 'understanding' means literally to stand under or among. This implies crossing boundaries inherent in 'standing apart from' and moves toward intimacy and empathy. This opens the door to a richer perception that transforms information and, along with it, the self who is perceiving. As Buber (1958) wrote, 'all real living is meeting' (p. 11), and understanding of the sort I am describing comes in the activity of meeting.

Conventional education is dominated by objectivism, a way of knowing which traps the other at a distance. The other remains an 'it' for our examination, utilitarian manipulation, or as an object to possess. The root meaning of the term objective means standing against or apart from. This capacity allows us to step back from enmeshment with the world and has helped to catalyze advances in science. But this way of knowing is incomplete. Palmer (1993) describes the down side to this posture: 'This image [standing over or against] uncovers another quality of modern knowledge: it puts us in an adversary relationship with each other and our world' (p. 23). The modernist milieu of objectification of the other, including the natural world (environment and body), contributes to difficulties in relationships and limits experience from which to make ethical choices. At the beginning of this century William James (1909) recognised that 'materialism and objectivism' tended to lead human beings to relate to their world as alien. And, as James, said: 'The difference between living against a background of foreignness [i.e., treating the world as alien] and one of intimacy means the difference between a general habit of wariness and one of trust' (p. 19). The result of this habitual wariness and distance is anxiety, depersonalisation, alienation, and narcissism. Objectivism serves as insufficient ground on which to fashion character or human values or a spiritual-oriented education.

Understanding requires a fundamental shift in the process of knowing. Buber (1958) describes this shift as a movement from an 'I-It' relationship' toward one of 'I and Thou.' Understanding comes when we empathise with the other, lean into the other, and suspend our self-separateness for a moment. This way of knowing is as useful in science as it is in human relationships. Barbara McClintock, Nobel Laureate in genetics working with corn plants, described a less detached empiricism, one in which she gains 'a feeling for the organism,' that requires 'the openness to let it come to you' (in Keller, 1983, p. 198). The other is no longer separate from, but is part of our world and ourselves in a profoundly intimate way.

Said another way, understanding is learning to see through the eye of the heart. All of the wisdom traditions speak of this heart, for example: the eye of the soul for Plato, the eye of the Tao (Smith, 1993), South on the Native American medicine wheel (Storm, 1972), and the Chinese 'hsin' which is often translated as mind

but includes both mind and heart (Huang Po, 1958). 'In contrast to modernity which situates knowing in the mind and brain, sacred traditions identify... essential knowing, with the heart' (Smith, 1993, p. 18).

The heart of understanding is cultivated through empathy, appreciation, openness, accommodation, service, listening, and loving presence. These activities move past an objectivist knowing (standing against) to meet the other (object, idea, or person) more directly and spontaneously and provide a balance to the critical questioning of intelligence. Intelligence, with its critical questioning and demand for evidence, together with understanding, with its intimate, appreciative empiricism, form a powerful combination.

One primary goal in teaching for understanding is to help the student see his or her own heart with trust and clarity. Said another way, the educational atmosphere must be 'for developing the sensitiveness of the soul, for affording mind its true freedom of sympathy' (Tagore, 1961, p. 64). 'Love is freedom: it gives us that fullness of existence which saves us from paying with our soul for objects that are immensely cheap' (p. 57). Part of the educator's role is to help find the song that sings in the student and help him or her learn to sing it. This may come through questions in the spirit of: 'Who are you? What have you come to learn and to teach? What is your offering, your gift, your work?' Instead we often do not ask and so the child has trouble knowing how to ask him/herself.

The Eye of Wisdom

Wisdom is an activity rather than a static entity to be accumulated. That is, 'one does not have wisdom as if it were a 'thing'. Rather, one acts wisely (Lawson, 1961, p. 8). Wisdom is distinguished from technical mastery or intellectual acuity especially by its moral dimension. Emerson says that wisdom is a blending of 'the 'intellectual' perception of truth and the moral sentiment of right' (cited in Sealts, 1992, p. 257). Wisdom involves 'human action which possesses both intellectual and ethical orientation; and... [this] is the task of education' (Lawson, 1961, p. vii). Wisdom has been described as involving capacities for empathy, self-knowledge, listening, comfort with ambiguity, a tendency to de-automatise thought routines, and movement beyond conceptual limits (Sternberg, 1990).

Wisdom serves to dynamically expand and integrate perspectives and involves the capacity to listen and translate the power of the intellect and the sensitivity of the heart into discernment and appropriate form (action, attitude, etc.). Whereas the heart of understanding is universal and indiscriminate, wisdom is able to bring this broad unconditionality to the particularities of a situation. For example, the wise response is not always 'Just love', it may be strategic, disruptive, confrontational. Jesus was said to have turned over the tables of the money changers who were set up in a holy temple; Martin Luther King organised a sit in at a lunch counter in Montgomery; Gandhi's radical non-violence confronted the authority of the British Empire. And we would not say that these actions were 'smart,' but they seemed to be wise in some profound way.

These examples reveal another characteristic of wisdom; the wise person sees beyond immediate self-interest. In this way wisdom does not simply serve individual growth but the movement of growth (evolution) in general. Wisdom provides a larger perspective, one that often goes beyond what we can see from a stance of fear and self-interest. Thomas Aquinas wrote: 'Wisdom differs from science in looking at things from a greater height... [it involves] *gnome*, or the ability to see through things' (Gilby, 1967, p. 364). While knowledge and intelligence are often equated with complexity, wisdom seems to emerge often as elegantly simple. Even children have demonstrated the capacity for this kind of seeing (Hart, 2003).

But why is wisdom so absent from educational aims? Rorty (1979) suggests that the Cartesian shift marked the 'triumph of the quest for certainty over the quest for wisdom' (p. 61). The goal thus became focused on rigor, prediction, and control rather than on wisdom or peace of mind.

Instead of grasping for certainty, wisdom rides the question, lives the question. Sternberg (1990) suggests that 'the wise person views himself and others as engaged in an unending dialectic with each other and the world' (p. 150). An unending dialectic is an activity that raises anxiety in the one-right-answer world of most contemporary schooling. When questions are treated primarily as problems to be solved (the domain of intelligence) the question is set up in opposition to the questioner. From the start the question becomes something to beat, to conquer. This may be playful or deadly serious and represents the best of intelligent engagement. Wisdom treats the question differently. It seeks questions, like looking for the best fruit on the tree. It then bites into the question, living it, allowing it to fulfill its purpose as nourishment. Whereas intelligence will cut, dismantle, and reconstruct the question in order to work toward a solution, wisdom mainly rides the question to see where it goes and what it turns into.

What this opens up to is not domination of the question but the possibility of wonder and insight. It welcomes epiphany as James Joyce named it. Heschel (1972) concludes that wisdom comes through awe and reverence: 'Wisdom comes from awe rather than from shrewdness. It is evoked not in moments of calculation but in moments of being in rapport with the mystery of reality' (p. 78).

Awe, wonder, reverence, epiphany are drawn forth not from a quest for control, domination, or certainty, but from an appreciative and open-ended engagement with the questions; this is why such qualities as listening, empathy, comfort with ambiguity and so forth (as mentioned above) are associated with wisdom and why the heart of understanding is an essential component.

Much of acting wisely comes through the inward spiral of self-knowledge. For example, Merton (1979) suggests that: 'the purpose of education is to show a person how to define himself authentically and spontaneously in relation to the world - not to impose a prefabricated definition of the world, still less an arbitrary definition of the individual himself' (p. 3). This keeps the question (and the person) alive, always at the edge of flowing into the next form, the next question.

When the inner life is attended to on a daily basis, it does not breed narcissistic preoccupation or indulgence, but the opportunity for depth and centring at the

intersection of inside and outside. All of the mystics and sages affirm the Delphic oracle's admonition to 'know thyself.' This inward awareness is not only important to provide balance but also because it reveals the intersection of our individual depth with a more universal depth. The universe lies not only about us but also within us; the outside can reveal the inside and vice versa. Each student's emerging self is the curriculum (Hopkins, 1970). 'Right education is to help you to find out for yourself what you really, with all your heart, love to do.... Then you are really efficient, without becoming brutal' (Krishnamurti, 1974, p. 76).

Wise people seem to find points of entry into the wisdom space. This may occur from a walk in the woods, through prayer, meditation, service, music, and so forth. This activity shifts attention from normally dominant ego-generated chatter and opens awareness. One way this can be cultivated is through what the Dalai Lama calls Mindscience (Goleman & Thurman, 1991). This awareness or mindfulness involves '... a mindful reflection that includes in the reflection on a question, the asker of the question and the process of asking itself' (Varela, Thomson, & Rosch, 1993, p. 30). This process 'begin(s) to sense and interrupt automatic patterns of conditioned thinking, sensation and behavior' (p. 122). Such awareness does not disengage the mind from the phenomenal world; it enables the mind to be fully present within the world. The point is '... not to avoid action but to become fully present in one's action' (p. 122). This is not a distant kind of objectivism but is instead a witnessing presence, one that Meister Eckhart (1958) refers to as 'detachment,' implying detachment from habitual responses. (see Hart, 2004b, for a discussion of opening the contemplative mind in the classroom.) (For more about teaching for wisdom see Hart, 2001b.)

The Paradox of Transformation

To transform means to go beyond current form. When education serves transformation it helps to take us beyond the mould of categories, the current limits of social structure, the pull of cultural conditioning, and the box of self-definition. We have the potential to 'exist in such a way not only to comprehend the facts of our lives but also to transcend them' (Peden, 1978, p. 211), and this is what the deepest moments in education lead toward.

Transformation is both an outcome and a process; it is the push and the pulse that drives self-organisation and self-transcendence. Transformation is a movement toward increasing wholeness that simultaneously pushes toward diversity and uniqueness—becoming more uniquely who we are or revealing more of what the subject is, and toward unity—recognising how much we have in common with the universe (and perhaps even the recognition that we are the universe).

Transformation emphasises fluidity and flexibility, movement and freshness, will and surrender, responsibility and liberation. However, these seem far from what contemporary education insists on. Instead, 'conventional schools work primarily for the purposes of limiting consciousness and reality to the current norms and defining power relations among the next generation' (Marshak, 1997, p. 215).

Today's schooling largely trains for adaptation to the status quo, as does much of psychotherapy—we seek to produce well-adjusted students (and clients) who can 'fit in' and fulfill our expectations of them in the workforce and in the classroom. And while adaptation has its place, it is incomplete and confining: 'If your ideal is adjustment to your situation... then your success is likely to be just that and no more. You never transcend anything. You grow but your spirit never jumps out of your skin to go on wild adventures' (Bourne, 1977, p. 334). Schooling has focused on adaptation to the status quo rather than its transformation within (person) and without (culture and society).

Each time of life has its developmental contingencies and opportunities; school age is a time for developing the tools of mind and the habits of heart that will serve and shape a life. Education for transformation or freedom does not try to impose or force or even teach liberation but provides liberating (transformative) habits and tools, from the strength of will, to the clarity of mind, to the stillness of contemplation, to inviting the natural compassion of the heart. Through their appropriate use, one may have the personal power and vision to consciously effect our own evolution. Goethe (1949) says: 'Whatever liberates our spirit without giving us mastery over ourselves is destructive' (p. 184). Transformative education enables us to avoid getting caught in our own little whirlpool of existence, so that we may live in the whole river of life. The whole function of education, then, is about cultivating one's whole being, the totality of mind, and the 'sensitiveness of soul' (Tagore, 1961, p. 64).

Energy is created in the reaction of transformation and it often heats up and catalyses further growth beyond the individual. Interdependence at all levels reminds us that social structures (e.g., slavery), cultural beliefs or values (e.g., prejudice), and consciousness of the universe as a whole may be changed as the ripple of individual transformation grows to a wave. Gandhi's personal awakening to injustice led to the transformation of a society. In this way the microgenetic spiral that I have outlined in this essay serves ontogenetic (the development of the individual) and phylogenetic development (the evolution of the species and the world).

In and of itself we could claim that the act of creation (in art, of the universe, of the thought and quality of our life in this moment) is akin to transformation. Whitehead (1967) referred to creativity as the ultimate category; the category necessary to understand all other processes. That is, creation as a movement into novelty is the basic process of existence.

Perhaps creativity is the most tangible and reproducible symbol of transformation. Creative activity (broadly defined) provides a touchstone for the act of teaching/ learning. Any activity that involves freshness of thought or perception, offers provocation and opportunity to stretch experience, or helps to develop the tools to rethink and re-experience our world, is creative and therefore potentially transformative. In addition, since we know that the teacher teaches not just a subject but also and especially who they are, does the teacher express his or her creativity in some authentic way? As a teacher, are we a model and expression of growth?

Transformation is inherently a spiritual endeavour. This is an activity that comes as we live our spiritual questions more knowingly and honestly. And living these questions means being present with them in this moment. As Whitehead wrote: 'The present contains all that there is. It is holy ground... The communion of saints is a great and inspiring assemblage, but it has only one possible hall of meeting, and that is, the present' (Whitehead, 1967, p. 4). This implies opening up the subject and waking up ourselves.

Conclusion

This brief overview suggests that spiritual education involves a curriculum of inner significances as well as one of outer information. It is engendered by shifts in how we know and in turn what is known. The quality and intention of knowing directs the process. It does not require that more information be added onto contemporary curriculum, but invites us to the depths of the subject-matter, the other and the Self.

When the heart of the discipline and our own hearts and minds are plumbed, information then serves its rightful place as currency for learning, knowledge brings an economy of interaction, intelligence gives power, precision, and critical reflection to our enterprise, understanding opens the heart, wisdom balances heart and head leading us to insight and right action, and transformation culminates this deepening spiral as it enjoins us with the force of creation and communion.

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SHOULD TEACHERS ADOPT DIFFERENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR YOUNG BOYS AND GIRLS IN RELATION TO SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT?

Dr. Tony Eaude

Research Fellow, Department of Educational Studies, University of Oxford

Introduction

The huge literature on gender contains surprisingly little in areas commonly associated with spiritual development, especially with young children. Most discussion of young children's spiritual development hardly mentions gender. This chapter elaborates the arguments in Eaude (2004a) on how to approach the question of whether, and how, gender may affect young children's spiritual development. Statistical evidence was presented there, showing considerable variations of outcome in areas such as crime, mental health and school exclusions and special school placements, albeit in older children and adults. While the statistics relate to England and Wales, similar patterns seem likely in other countries. Work such as that of Francis (2001) on values and Halstead and Waite (2001) on attitudes to sex education was cited to suggest, *prima facie*, significant differences of outcome according to gender in areas commonly related to spiritual development. I argued that these challenge any understanding of spiritual development, though the challenges vary depending on one's understanding.

I start by summarising some research difficulties and offer some cautionary notes, before highlighting key themes related to gender identity, to spiritual development, and to pedagogy for young children. I consider the research which examines boys' and girls' different responses in areas commonly associated with spiritual development, the arguments for and against specific intervention. Finally, I suggest tentative areas in which different pedagogical approaches may be appropriate.

Methodological Considerations

How gender identity develops and what, if anything, teachers should do about this, are matters of considerable debate and rouse strong feelings. This chapter, inevitably, reflects and draws on my own beliefs in highlighting key debates but seeks to present challenges to any teacher's understanding of the link between spiritual development and gender. It is important that an appropriate research model both allows for, and challenges, different readers' 'fore-meanings' and presuppositions about spiritual development, gender identity and pedagogy. Ultimately, such a model should involve empirical observation of, and listening to, how young children respond, rather than relying on asking what they think, let alone what their teachers think they think. However, conflicting definitions, or understandings, of spirituality—and therefore, what is to be observed—and the difficulties of interpreting what is observed, especially with young children, make empirical observation problematic. The essentially contested nature of spiritual development means that starting from a fixed definition lays one open to the challenge 'but that is not what I understand spiritual development to be about'. So this needs to be left as open as possible.

A research approach based solely on outcome measures is too simplistic. A more ethnographic, interpretative approach, seeking to explain observably different outcomes by reference to aspects commonly related to spiritual development, seems more promising. While such an approach is time-consuming and remains open to differing interpretations of what spiritual development entails, it may be better to explore such questions by considering children's responses within specific domains such as mathematics, or art, or behaviour, rather than gender or spiritual development as such. This, and the use of collaborative studies, may help to counter the charge of one view of spiritual development or of gender or both being presupposed. Such an approach may be appropriate to examine the link between spiritual development and even more contested and controversial elements, such as physical or mental ability, ethnicity or class.

Let me introduce three cautionary notes. The first is that any such discussion tends towards a polarised view of gender, whereas most research is cautious about the effect of gender. As Thorne (1993, p. 104) writes 'in (...) statistically based research on sex/gender differences, within-gender variation is greater than differences between boys and girls taken as a group.' However, the same study and Connolly (1998) note that girls tend to make relationships more easily and spend more time on exploring and sustaining them. As Burbules (2004, p. 13) writes, 'while there is certainly no one-to-one correspondence between social groups and ... personal traits and attitudes, it is not hard to see that people in certain situations, like poverty, tend to be more susceptible to hopelessness and resentment; those who are more privileged and affluent tend to be more susceptible to complacency and self-righteousness; and those in positions of unquestioned power tend to be more susceptible to arrogance and egoism.' It would be facile to suggest that all girls or all boys fit into a particular mould, or that gender is more than one among

many explanatory factors. Differences should not be overstated, but neither should commonalities be ignored.

Secondly, one should ask whether looking for any link between gender and spiritual development is worthwhile. Discussions of women's spirituality, or spiritualities, such as Jantzen (1995) and Slee (2000), suggest a wide consensus that women and men experience, and respond to, spirituality differently. This would be a useful area for further research in relation to young children. If, as is widely agreed, spiritual development deals with what is most important or ultimate, however great the disagreement about what that is, it seems perverse not, at least, to raise the question. However, unless this leads, ultimately, to consideration of how provision for young children's spiritual development should be differentiated (or not) for girls and boys, such an exercise seems pointless.

Thirdly, we must remember that teachers may find the implications of any such differential provision very challenging. The teachers in my doctoral research tended to have an immediate response that gender is not a factor in spiritual development, though subsequent thought led several to question this. Teachers are rightly cautious about suggested changes to tried and tested pedagogies, based, often, on strongly held beliefs, developed over many years. However, our knowledge of the importance of experiences in early childhood and the often detrimental pressures resulting from social and cultural change should encourage teachers to re-consider some cherished beliefs.

How Gender Identity is Formed

This section summarises, briefly, the key points about how gender identity is constructed. Hall (cited in Mac an Ghaill, 1994, p. 9) comments that 'identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps... we should think... of identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process.' Davies (1997, p.11) stresses 'the fluidity of gender and its socially or discursively constructed nature.' Connell (1995, p. 71) writes 'rather than attempting to define masculinity as an object (a natural character type, a behavioural average, a norm) we need to focus on the pressures and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives.' Gender identity is always related both to wider social pressures and positioning vis a vis normative gender roles.

The research on attachment in infancy, stemming from Bowlby (1965), emphasises that patterns of emotional response and how we relate to each other are strongly influenced by early experience. The growing recognition within neurological research, summarised accessibly in Pinker (1998) and Greenfield (1997), of the brain's plasticity—and how 'hard-wiring' makes changes more difficult the older one becomes—reinforces this, and how expectations and feedback affect who we become. While conscious exploration of beliefs and values is most evident in adolescence, experience, both conscious and otherwise, at a younger age has a powerful impact into adolescence and beyond. So teachers should at least consider earlier and more direct intervention than they have done, historically speaking. This

underlies the approach of many faith traditions to incorporate young children into a community of faith and morality, acquiring familiarity with its stories, symbols and practices. As the Jesuits said, 'give me a child until the age of seven and he is mine for life.'

The child is an active agent in the formation of gender identity, as in other aspects of learning (Bruner, 1996, pp. 92–97). Agency does not occur in a vacuum, but within culture and based on relationship and feedback. The pressures from family, peer group and wider culture to conform to particular patterns and behaviours are strong. Renold (2004) highlights the influences in primary schools on boys who exhibit non-typical boys' behaviour to conform. Foster, Kimmel & Skelton (2001, pp. 4–7) highlight Epstein's comment that a 'boys will be boys' approach tends both to 'posit an unchanging and unchangeable 'boyiness', which involves fighting, aggression and delayed ...maturity and yet situates poor achievement as extrinsic to boys themselves.' A 'poor boys' approach tends to locate the cause of the problem with inadequate upbringing, usually blamed on women. Both approaches highlight the difficulty of changing the patterns of masculinity. Conformity to acceptable parameters seems to matter more in emerging masculinity than femininity.

Francis (1997) discusses how children in mixed-sex groups tended to adopt conventional gender-based roles, such as boys being 'silly-selfish' and girls 'sensible-selfless', while single-sex groups enabled the adoption of more divergent roles. This suggests that:

- without active intervention, external pressures tend to reinforce gender roles in accordance with stereotypical patterns;
- (some at least) boys and girls may benefit from times away from the mixed environment; and
- teachers need at least not to discourage patterns of behaviour which diverge from conventional gender roles and should actively encourage critical reflection on such patterns of behaviour.

Differing Traditions of Spiritual Development and Pedagogy

In this section, I highlight briefly three major dividing lines between traditions of spiritual development, suggesting how the evidence of different outcomes for girls and boys may be a challenge to all such traditions. The most well-known debate is whether spiritual development depends necessarily on involvement within, and incorporation into, a faith tradition. Those, such as Carr (1996) and Wright (2000) who hold that it does, join most Catholics, Jews and Muslims in placing spiritual development within a structure of faith and morality. Others, such as Hay (1998) and Erricker, C., Erricker, J., Sullivan, Ota & Fletcher (1997), see it as something universal and 'free-standing' from any specific faith tradition. For those with the former view, the evidence on how boys and girls have different approaches to, and involvement in, belief and worship may be more relevant, while the latter may take more account of evidence about emotional and moral responses.

A second dividing line relates to whether spirituality is seen as, primarily, an individual, interior process or whether, as Hull (1996) and Erricker et al. (1997) argue, it is related to social and cultural values and structures. For the former, difficulties with girls or boys engaging in such a process, whether because they find it hard or adults believe that such an activity is inappropriate to their gender, seems to call for recuperative strategies, or at least more overt intervention. The latter are likely to regard a pedagogy which enables boys and girls to critique their own and others' values and patterns of behaviour as central to spiritual development.

A third, less clear-cut, dividing line differentiates those who see spiritual development as additive, where children acquire certain dispositions, attitudes and skills from those who view it as removing barriers to enable and encourage innate qualities, such as joy, curiosity or innocence, to flourish. Burbules (2004, p. 13) writes of the need to 'unlearn' certain characteristics inimical to spiritual development such as self-righteousness, complacency, arrogance, egoism, resentment and hopelessness. The teacher's role in spiritual development would seem to include working against these taking root in young children. However, most teachers would see spiritual development as involving to some extent both additive elements and the removal of barriers.

Some consensus that the teacher's role includes influencing children for good and enabling them to explore and internalise values, however much the means and the values themselves remain open to debate, seems to underlie most approaches to spiritual development. While spiritual development is widely agreed to relate to questions of meaning and purpose and what is most important, there is less consensus on whether this relates to religion or values or relationships. Any apparent consensus disintegrates further when one moves to consider what teachers should do.

Early years teachers tend to emphasise an enabling environment, where the child is seen as an active learner with innate capacities to be nurtured and too much active intervention frowned on. This accords with a view of spiritual development mainly as drawing on inherent capacities. That boys and girls have broadly similar educational needs, and should always be taught together, is almost a given. The question here is how much adults should intervene and whether this is helpful. A more didactic approach is exemplified in the thinking behind the adoption in England in the 1990s of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, with a greater emphasis on knowledge transmission, skills and measurable results and less on creative and investigative activities and play. Here, the concern is how children are enabled to explore for themselves questions related to ultimacy and meaning. Too little experience of agency and the use of critical faculties may mean that children reach the turbulence of adolescence ill-equipped to explore their emerging identity and vulnerable to attractive, often harmful, influences.

Such distinctions may seem somewhat crude, as most teachers draw from both traditions. However, the challenge is to strike the balance between too much prescription, which may restrict the child's sense of agency, and too little which offers insufficient structure within which the child can explore his or her developing identity.

The Challenge of Social and Cultural Change

The last two to three decades have seen major social changes in Western societies. Greater geographical mobility and the wider range of opportunities available mean that young children tend to operate within more diverse and less definite structures, from the extended family and the local community to faith communities and voluntary groups. Second, the pressure of wider culture, most obviously through visual media and magazines increasingly targeting young children, tends towards both consumerism and conformity, running counter to what is valued in most spiritual traditions. Advertising makes having the right brand or fashion a more important consideration for children than previously. Powerful images emphasise both the importance of what one possesses as prime markers of identity and of peer group as arbiters of whether one belongs. Young children are, simultaneously, offered greater individual choice, less definite structure within which to learn how to exercise this choice and very strong, alluring influences which present images of success based on commodities and consumption. These reinforce the desire for gratification common in early childhood, with young boys tending to see masculinity as based on dominance, aggression and sporting prowess and young girls success as a woman based on passivity, conformity and sexualisation.

The peer group reinforces the pressure to conform to expectations of gender roles, for example, encouraging girls to adopt styles of dress and behaviour based on sexual attraction at a younger age than previously; and drawing boys into a competitive and aggressive culture. More insidious, and less obvious, is how peer pressure encourages conformity by excluding those who exhibit behaviour which deviates from the norm, as Renold (2004) indicates. Further investigation is needed into which areas and to what extent young girls and boys are influenced by their peer group. However, the pressure to conform is undoubtedly strong on all children, maybe disproportionately so on disadvantaged groups with lower thresholds of parental or other support. For instance, one factor in why the academic attainment of boys of Caribbean heritage (Black Boys Can, 2003) declines relative to other groups is that, as they get older, black boys (much more so than black girls) tend to gain self-esteem by activities other than being successful learners. Acceptance in that peer-group often entails adopting behaviour militating against academic attainment.

Resilience factors, some within individuals, others rooted in family and community support, seem especially important in children resisting external pressures. Schools may be one of the best arenas to challenge the powerful pressure to conform to accepted norms of gender identity to which children are exposed. So it is appropriate to ask whether and how teachers can help young boys learn how to become men—and young girls, women—without necessarily conforming to such norms.

Exploring Children's Responses

Rather than observing differences of 'approach', as suggested in Eaude (2004a), observation of different types of response to similar experiences in areas associated with spiritual development would provide empirical evidence on which to base

a greater understanding of young girls' and boys' spiritual development. This may offer a way of exploring areas such as painful, or potentially painful, experience, 'awe and wonder' experiences, creativity and capacities for joy, curiosity, compassion and openness, all often linked with spiritual development and none easily offering reliable outcome evidence. I speculate, in this section, on what the results of such empirical research might be, based on research with older children and discussions and observations of young children both as teacher and researcher. I shall return to whether, and how, teachers should encourage, or otherwise, particular responses.

Bruner (1986, pp. 11–43) categorises two primary modes of thought, or 'distinctive ways of ordering experience of constructing reality'. He calls one logico-scientific, where phenomena are described and explained according to categories related to one another to form a system. The other he calls narrative, which seeks verisimilitude, or likeness to life, rather than formal and empirical truth. Feminist writers, such as Gilligan (1982), suggest that for women and girls the rationale for moral decisions is relationship and interdependence rather than the autonomy and independence which Kohlberg (1987) assumed to be normative. Mikel Brown and Gilligan (1992) emphasise how girls construct their identity through narrative and relationships. So boys and girls may tend to adopt different frameworks for understanding themselves, in areas ranging from relationships to values, from worship to self-image. Bruner's distinction may be useful, in broad terms, in understanding how boys and girls interpret experience, and so in making sense of their responses.

One area where boys and girls seem to respond observably differently is that of emotion and behaviour, manifested in their activities and the types of relationship formed. Yet a best-seller book such as Goleman's (1996) on emotional intelligence devotes only three pages to gender differences, while recognising 'the separate emotional worlds boys and girls inhabit while growing up.' (p. 130). Francis' (2001) work on values, albeit with 13 to 15 year olds, supports this. He concludes (p. 109): 'young women and young men inhabit and shape quite different world-views.'

At the risk of over-simplifying, boys tend towards behaviour which:

- conforms less to adult expectation and is less reliant on adult approval;
- shows less awareness of other people's feelings;
- is more aggressive and often obsessive; and
- is more competitive.

Boys' responses may appear more open and 'up-front'. Girls seem to have a wider range of strategies which enable them to cope with anger and upset. While the way in which emotion is manifested is complex, boys and girls seem to process certain emotions differently. For example girls' expressions of anger, and boys' of anxiety, tend to follow stereotypical patterns which both reflect and reinforce gender roles. How boys learn to repress, to express, and, in particular, to avoid expressing such emotions affects both their behaviour towards other people and their own emerging identity.

This seems best explained by the types of relationship formed and how emotion is processed. In Gilligan's words, (cited in Goleman 1996, p. 131), 'boys take pride

in a lone, tough-minded independence and autonomy, while girls see themselves as part of a web of connectedness.' Girls' relationships tend to be based more on personal interaction, boys' more on specific activities, discouraging intimacy. Men's difficulties in learning to be intimate or to deal with vulnerability suggests that constructions of masculinity as independent and invulnerable need to be challenged from an early age. Similarly, how to help girls be more assertive or, more controversially, resilient against the emotional pressures within their peer group is worth considering.

In terms of differential responses to religious observance, feminist thinking has made a powerful case for distinctive aspects of women's spirituality, based both on empirical evidence of women attending worship more than men and something more basic involving different types of response, with women responding more to symbolism and mysticism, men more to language and rationality. If, as Francis (2001) suggests, different responses are evident by early adolescence, it would seem possible to explore if, and how, these are manifested with younger boys and girls. For example, do boys and girls respond to, and understand, symbols in different ways? Or find different environments or stimuli more conducive to reflection?

'Awe and wonder' experiences or opportunities for children to demonstrate insight 'beyond the apparent', are often associated with spiritual development. Such activities as art, music and the experience of nature are seen in many traditions as 'routes into' spirituality, working in ways beyond the conscious and the rational. Both areas seem to be fertile ground for empirical observation of exploring whether, and how, boys and girls respond differently. Anecdotal evidence suggests that boys are more physical and tactile in their responses and may prefer recording responses graphically, whereas girls work in the abstract and using words more comfortably, but these areas remain, as far as I am aware, not widely researched.

Creativity is often associated with spiritual development. But the implications require further examination. Originality and divergence from passive acceptance seems at the core of creativity. This may be valued strongly within liberal traditions, where boys' tendencies towards divergence tend to be encouraged and girls' towards conformity challenged. However, even within such traditions, divergence is likely to be encouraged only up to a point. In traditions which link spiritual development closely to faith and belief, convergence to particular cultural mores or religious beliefs is valued more. The parameters of how much divergence is acceptable will always vary according to one's view of the purpose of education. So a consideration of spiritual development can challenge our view even of ideas such as creativity which many teachers see as an unqualified good.

One powerful strand within many spiritual traditions is sometimes called the prophetic voice of the child, where young children show qualities which adults lose, or demonstrate far less, and where adults need to learn from children rather than the other way around. Among these are the capacities for, or dispositions towards, joy, simplicity or openness, compassion or curiosity. While these may often be thought of as innate and unrelated to gender, it is hard to believe that they are not enhanced or inhibited by adult feedback. So, if boys show more curiosity, this may

be attributed to how this is encouraged and if girls show more compassion this may result from a greater empathy springing from the approach to relationships outlined above. If one believes, as I do, that spiritual development involves helping children to address painful and potentially painful experiences, we need to know more about different responses to these.

I have tentatively suggested possible areas commonly associated with spiritual development where boys' and girls' responses could be examined empirically, and I have presented some (insufficiently unsupported) hypotheses. Exploring what contributes to, or enriches, such responses, provides a foundation for considering whether particular teaching strategies can encourage children to reinforce or challenge their understanding of themselves as boys or girls. So, I now turn to possible areas where this can happen and how teachers (or others) should cater for these needs.

Should One Make Different Provision for Boys and Girls?

Teachers of young children are often reluctant to intervene in sensitive areas such as gender identity. In this section, I review three different sorts of argument which may be made against specific intervention, hoping that the argument that only what happens during adolescence really matters can be dismissed without comment.

The first is that, as a point of principle, boys and girls should be treated the same. While this is a commonly-held view, often stated in the name of equal opportunity, it seems to abdicate the teacher's role in helping to influence, for good, attitudes and behaviour. A decision, in principle, not to do anything to reinforce desirable attributes and counter undesirable ones seems to leave all children, but disadvantaged groups in particular, vulnerable to powerful, undesirable external pressures. Without advocating any particular model of masculinity or femininity, I suggest that teachers have a responsibility to counter undesirable gender-based images presented within the media, and often reinforced in peer groups. What counts as undesirable is a matter of debate.

A second argument is that children should be allowed to develop their own aptitudes, modes of thought and learning styles. However, most spiritual traditions stress the need for balance, with yin balanced by yang, rational approaches by mystical ones, the analytic and logical by the reflective and intuitive. Most educational traditions emphasise the importance of young children, in particular, experiencing a breadth of experience and being discouraged from too early a specialisation. An aptitude as a violinist, or as goal-scorer in a team sport setting, would only in exceptional cases seem to justify an exclusive emphasis on this. Equally, an ability to write good stories should not preclude writing poetry or non-fiction. It is a widely held principle that such specialisation should not precede adolescence and that education should help children to improve in areas they find difficult as well to work within domains where they are comfortable and successful.

A third argument is that any intervention would be ineffective. Two main reasons might be given, one that gender identity is fixed, and even biologically determined,

although it would rarely be stated as crudely. 'Boys will be boys' is largely based on such a belief. I have argued that gender identity is a more fluid and complex process. The second reason is that one may think that intervention will not work because the pressures of enculturation are too strong. Probably, anyone who has considered the subject has felt this, but it is ultimately a counsel of despair. Just because something is difficult seems a poor argument for doing nothing different. So let us turn to possible strategies.

Considering the Pedagogical Implications

In this section, I develop further the implications for pedagogy discussed briefly in Eaude (2004a). Rather than being prescriptive, I suggest that, quite apart from arousing resentment, what is appropriate is a matter, at least in part, of professional judgement, dependent on the specific context. Considering children's spiritual development brings one back constantly to the ends of education and challenges the validity of simplistic solutions. Most aspects of spiritual development depend to a significant extent on subtle, more implicit processes, often operating at a level bypassing, or beyond, consciousness. A consideration of spiritual development and gender does not provide a list of 'what to do' so much as a challenge to the mechanistic notion of education, separate from considerations of value. This leads towards a recognition of the need to work at a deeper level than that of symptoms. So, for example, an approach such as Values Education, outlined and evaluated in Eaude (2004b), both offers models of what specific values 'look like' in practice and encourages explicit reflection on what they mean.

Most experience which enhances spiritual development is common to girls and boys. For instance, the importance of being listened and attended to, of exploring right and wrong and of experiencing the wonder of nature is, surely, universal. So common provision is likely to be appropriate for much of the time, but there is a case for subtly different teaching techniques and for some separate provision. Making an analogy with young bilinguals, there is a strong argument for teaching within the classroom with additional support taking account of cultural capital and sensitivities but also for provision in smaller groups for some of the time. The same may be true in some respects for boys and in others for girls. Even if all children are thought to benefit from exploring how to express emotion or a particular style of worship, it is hard to see why gender should not be considered a criterion for receiving additional or alternative provision.

While most strategies involve consideration at a whole-school level, individual teachers can address those where possible implications are pedagogical rather than structural. Take, for example, the sort of behaviour which is expected and how teachers can encourage this. While all children require consistent boundaries, different types of reward and reinforcement may be appropriate for different groups. For example, many boys seem to find clear micro-targets and explicit rewards helpful, while many girls may respond better to discussing the impact of their behaviour on other children. However, this is a question not only of mechanisms

but of the ends of education. If, for example, one wants to encourage girls to be more assertive, or boys to consider other people's feelings, one may prompt them, in advance, to do so or may praise them when they are more assertive or considerate - or, in practice, both. But first one needs to have decided on the sort of behaviour seen as desirable.

A second example is that of play, which Winnicott (1980) links closely with the development of the personality. Play enables the child to imagine and experience the world as other than it is, without having to bear the emotional consequences. Although all children need this, boys may need more opportunities for play if they are to learn to understand themselves and their emotions better. Moreover, as Jordan (1995) suggests, intervention in their play is needed if young boys are to be challenged into experimenting with alternative versions of masculinity. Similarly, if drama and role-play helps to encourage empathy and interdependence and develop an understanding of oneself 'as if' from another perspective, many boys may benefit from this especially.

A similar argument may be made in relation to reflection, or prayer. Most spiritual traditions emphasise the importance of space for reflection whether in silence, with music or as part of a ritual. It is a need common to all children but not necessarily to be met in exactly the same way. Certain approaches may engage, or be more attractive to, girls or boys so there is a strong argument for a range of styles. But if boys find it harder to reflect quietly, they may need specific practice or guidance, just as children with reading difficulties require additional support.

Moving into more structural areas, consider how children should be grouped. In Lloyd and Duveen's (1992, p. 122) words, 'a consequence of the teacher's attention to individual children is that children spend more time engaged in peer-organised activities.... It may be that the greater amount of time available for peer-organised activities encourages (gender) differentiation among girls. The pedagogic style adopted by the teacher may have unintended consequences for the development of gender identities among the children.' So, *laissez-faire* approaches may leave children too open to the pressures of peer group and external factors. Hence the argument in Eade (2004a) that teachers should be more interventionist in grouping children, so that boys and girls are actively encouraged to play, or work, in mixed-gender groups. Unless boys learn to collaborate with and, to some extent, empathise with girls, and girls with boys, the 'separate worlds' approach highlighted above by Francis is likely to be reinforced. In the name of equal opportunity, teachers may unwittingly reinforce rather than challenge gender stereotypes.

To develop certain qualities, single-sex groupings may be worthy of consideration. Francis (2000, pp. 144–146) reviews the research, mostly in secondary schools, on the advantages, and problems, of working in single-sex groupings, suggesting (p. 145) that 'single-sex small-group work is useful for getting pupils to think more closely about particular, sensitive topics and to discuss these issues in a relatively 'safe' environment.' She suggests that among suitable topics may be the development of assertiveness and speculation skills for girls and reflection, tenderness and communication for boys. Such environments seem to enable children

to concentrate more on learning and less on the dynamics of relationships and roles. In my own experience, introducing single-sex swimming with younger children, while strongly opposed by many parents, was popular with many girls because they were not put off by the boys' behaviour.

A further example requiring consideration at the whole school level relates to staffing. Since children learn from what adults do more than what they say, the role models on which to base their gender identity are very important. The younger the child, the more the responsibility for care and education tends to be in the hands of women. It is important that both boys and girls interact with men and women who offer examples of appropriate responses and behaviour. The paucity of men in educational settings for young children restrict these opportunities, arguably affecting boys adversely and disproportionately, particularly those who lack appropriate, or are exposed to inappropriate, examples outside school.

Many aspects of school life which may seem, on the face of it, gender-neutral contribute, often subtly, to this. So, assemblies which affirm particular values or encourage particular behaviour, engage children in different approaches to worship or highlight specific types of achievement may all have their place in promoting or challenging different aspects of gender identity. While how teachers respond will depend on the school's ethos and philosophy, my argument is for teachers to consider the different needs of boys or girls, and of specific boys and girls, as they would for talented children or those with special needs. Teachers are reluctant to do so, often fearful that such intervention is intrusive, but non-intervention may be damaging by omission just as too much prescription is by commission.

In this section, I have outlined several areas where different approaches may be worth considering, but such a list is far from exhaustive and needs considerable refinement in the light of the research on children's responses which I have called for—and, beyond that, empirical evidence of the effects of such strategies, not simply on attainment, but on aspects such as values and beliefs.

I am conscious of paying too little attention to the age of the child, other than highlighting the pre-adolescent years. There is a great difference between three- and ten- year olds, and I have tended to aggregate them. This is in part because of lack of space, but more to do with a belief that the prime agent of change will be when teachers reflect on the different needs of boys and girls, an area too easily forgotten when the mechanics of classroom organisation, planning and delivery are given a privileged place in training.

Conclusions and Implications for Pedagogy and Spirituality

In conclusion, I reflect briefly on my arguments. Because of the contested and strongly held views of both gender and spiritual development, and particularly a concern about intervening too overtly, prescriptive solutions are inappropriate. However, a case can be made for earlier intervention in aspects associated with spiritual development where undesirable outcomes show a wide difference between

boys and girls. Social change, with greater individual choice and more fluid structures to guide such choice, increases the importance of the school's role, as the one public institution which almost all children attend. Of course, the school cannot do it all. Education takes place within the deeper and wider contexts of family and society. But schools have an important place as moral communities, offering many features comparable to faith traditions, in incorporating the child into a community based on values and relationships.

A response that we should not treat boys and girls differently because spiritual development is about a common humanity is insufficient. As Weeks (cited in Mac an Ghaill, 1994, p. 171) writes, 'all the appeals to our common interest as humans will be as naught unless we can at the same time learn to live with difference.' The social and cultural pressures towards conformity to imposed norms of behaviour and identity—based to a considerable extent on models of gender which reinforce rather than challenge stereotypes—make a *laissez faire* approach too passive. A lack of intervention seems likely to exacerbate the pressures on those already disadvantaged. However, prescriptive pedagogies also need to be challenged. These may, on the basis of rigid, even oppressive, conceptions of gender, provide insufficient space for children to explore, and develop, their own identities. I am arguing therefore for structure but not too rigid a structure, with a subtle mixture of intervention and leaving space for exploration, so that children are:

- enabled to make the responses that come most naturally, both to discover and develop preferred responses and learning styles and to explore and extend their range of responses; and
- encouraged to be reflective so that they become increasingly aware of what makes them both similar to, and separate from, other people, so that they are in a stronger position to challenge external expectations.

In writing this, I have become aware of why little has been written about gender and spiritual development. It leads to uncomfortable complexity rather than simple solutions. Most statements of what one might do need to be qualified and impinge on areas which sit uncomfortably with other strongly held beliefs. Practical proposals need to be assessed empirically to see how effective they are, in the light of our educational aims and purposes. The challenge of spiritual development is always radical, for it prompts considerations of the values which we wish to pass on, rather than relying on simplistic notions of achievement. Unless teachers are prepared to consider more direct intervention in the processes which form children's personalities, they risk ceding the responsibility for spiritual development to forces both powerful and inimical to these values.

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NURTURING THE SPIRIT IN PRIMARY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

Brendan Hyde

Australian Catholic University Melbourne, Australia

Introduction

In Australian Catholic primary classrooms, the spiritual life of children has become an area of rapidly developing interest. Religious educators have begun to question the extent to which they can undertake contemporary religious education without a deeper understanding of the worldviews and meaning-making systems of the children who attend Catholic primary schools (Liddy, 2002). Yet in Australia, there has to date been little published research in the area of young children's spirituality, and virtually none that explicitly explores how the spirituality of children in Australian Catholic primary schools might be nurtured.

This chapter seeks to address this situation, and to contribute to a small but growing body of knowledge in relation to the spirituality of children in Australian Catholic primary schools. It is divided into two parts. The first presents examples of hermeneutic phenomenological writing and reflection upon one particular characteristic of children's spirituality that has emerged from my own research. I have termed this characteristic as *the felt sense*. A reflection on this characteristic is guided by van Manen's (1990) notion of lifeworld existentials. The four lifeworld existentials are *lived body*, *lived space*, *lived time* and *lived relation to the other*. These lifeworld existentials have been drawn upon and well used in the phenomenological literature (for example, Merleau-Ponty, 1962/1996; van Manen, 1990). As well, I have drawn upon them in preparing the ground for my own research (Hyde, 2003, 2004a).

The second part of this chapter suggests a possible pedagogical framework for nurturing the spirituality of children in Australian primary RE classrooms. This framework is informed by my own research and has emanated from my reflections upon the life expressions of the children who took part in my study, as well as the particular characteristic discussed here, that may be indicative of their spirituality (see also Hyde, 2004b).

The Felt Sense—A Characteristic of Children's Spirituality

The felt sense has a close connection with the notion of *flow* described by Csikszentmihalyi (1975). Flow involves the experience of concentrated attention giving way to a liberating feeling of the activity being managed by itself, or by some outside influence. The action of the activity in which one is involved and the awareness of that activity become merged. Flow is:

... a holistic sensation that people feel when they act with total involvement... action follows upon action according to an internal logic that seems to need no conscious intervention by the actor. He experiences it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which he is in control of his actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment, between past, present and future (p. 36).

Of particular importance in attending to *the felt sense* is Gendlin's (1981) notion of *focusing*. Focusing entails the attending to the bodily awareness of situations, persons, or events. Bodily awareness is not a mental experience, but a *physical* one:

A felt sense doesn't come to you in the form of thoughts or words or other separate units, but as a single (though often puzzling and very complex) bodily feeling... Since a felt sense doesn't communicate itself in words it isn't easy to describe in words. It is an unfamiliar, deep-down level of awareness (p. 33).

Gendlin (1981) has maintained that individuals encounter and act upon the world with the whole of their bodies. An individual's corporeality is then a primary source of knowledge. Attending to *the felt sense* may enable a person to draw upon the wisdom of the physical body in assisting with personal difficulties and in being sensitively aware in relationships. In other words, it may enable an individual to get in touch with the felt sense of a particular situation.

The following examples of hermeneutic phenomenological writing are indicative of this characteristic. In each case, the children had been invited to choose from a selection of activities the one they would most like to do. The activities included seed planting, jigsaw puzzles, 'bead creations', and drawing. It was felt that these activities might have enabled the children to engage in experiences of flow, and of focusing their awareness on the here-and-now (Hay & Nye, 1998). The first example, centred on a group of Year 3 children (aged 8) in an inner city Catholic school who took part in my research, is indicative of this characteristic.¹

Eagerly, the children moved to select their activity. Marco headed straight for the bead creations activity. He selected his stencil and began to choose beads

¹ All names of children in this chapter are pseudonyms to protect their identity.

to place on it. 'I'm going to finish this,' he murmured almost to himself as he settled and began to engage in this activity. His focus was almost immediate. Carefully and skillfully, he manipulated the beads, selecting his colors and moving them into position. His actions and awareness seemed to merge as a look of delight came across his face.

Soon, he was joined by Tran, who had been planting seeds. His arrival was unacknowledged by Marco, and so Tran too began to engage in this activity. Quite consciously and gently, Tran ran his fingers across the pile of beads, acknowledging their texture and shape. He selected his beads with thought and care.

'Oh no,' whispered Marco. He had accidentally knocked some of the beads from their position on the stencil. Painstakingly, he set about restoring his work. There were one or two short exchanges of whispers between the two boys at this point about which color beads to select. Yet, quiet prevailed. One might intuit a reverence – almost a sense of the sacred in this activity. It was as though both children desired to maintain the silence and tranquility of the space in which this activity was undertaken, and which this activity seemed to deserve.

It was interesting to observe these two boys and their absorption in this activity. It was fascinating to see these two boys, who, as I had observed in the classroom context, could often be quite active and boisterous, now consumed in the concentration and the quiet that this task demanded.

Similarly, the following example of hermeneutic phenomenological writing, this time centred on a group of children in Year 5 (aged 10) from a suburban Catholic school, indicates the presence of *the felt sense*:

Alicia, John and Cameron made their way to the table containing the materials for the bead creations. Although all three children sat next to each other, there was no interaction between them. They could well have been physically situated in separate countries, or at opposite ends of the earth, for there appeared no dealings between them. Each seemed content, and although they were seated within close proximity to one another, each seemed oblivious to the presence of her/his peers.

Meanwhile, Adam carefully and skillfully engaged in the tactile experience of placing potting mix into the seed boxes. He patted the soil into each of the sockets. He seemed to acknowledge the consistency of the soil as he rubbed it between his thumb and fingers. Then, delicately, he placed one or two of the seeds into each of the sockets, and gently compressed them into the potting mixture. In a way that could almost be described as lovingly, he added a little water to each. Adam too seemed to be oblivious to the presence of his peers at the adjacent table.

Except for the sounds of the beads being placed onto the templates, and the occasional trickle of water from the seed planting, there was almost silence. A pin would have been heard to drop. Their focus and engagement in their

chosen activities was at once intense, yet also relaxing. None of the children appeared anxious or stressed. They appeared to be calm, even tranquil, lost in the activity to which each was attending.

A group of Year 5 children (aged 10) situated in a rural Catholic school context also exhibited this particular characteristic of their spirituality:

The three girls set to work on the jigsaw puzzle. They worked cooperatively, and there was little unnecessary chatting. Any talking was directed at the task, and was, for the most part, carried out through whispering. Kristy's finger tips gently ran across the individual pieces that were laid out on the floor, searching for the correct interlocking parts. There seemed a need and a desire to honor the quiet – the sacredness – that this activity required.

Soon, the children who were engaged in the seed planting joined the jigsaw group. They began working on a separate section of the puzzle. They moved their fingers gently across the individual pieces, almost as if the physical sensation would somehow indicate the correct piece that might be required. Although they used their sense of sight to search the array of patterns presented by the jigsaw pieces, these children seemed to be relying on the wisdom of physical sensation inherent in their sense of touch in locating the pieces needed to complete this particular task.

It was not long before this new section was ready to be attached to the original segment. There was some excitement as this was undertaken, accompanied by looks of pride and satisfaction. My announcement that it was almost time to conclude was met with cries of surprise and disappointment. Could the time have passed that quickly? They believed that they had not long begun their task. Yet some thirty minutes of time had passed since beginning the jigsaw. 'Oh no!' they lamented as one voice.

The Felt Sense and Lived Body

These children encountered the activities in which they chose to engage in a corporeal way. They drew readily upon their bodily senses in order to connect in some way with their activity. What they experienced was tactile and sensorial. It was an experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), of acting with total involvement in relation to the activity in which each child was engaged. However, upon further reflection, it seemed that something more than flow may have been occurring in these instances. The characteristic termed as *the felt sense* has been used to describe this 'something more' that became evident.

In reflecting upon the texts of my study, *the felt sense* seemed to involve a conscious perception of physical bodily awareness. In each of the hermeneutic phenomenological descriptions, there was a sense in which the children were aware of their bodily engagement in the activity of their choice. For example, when engaging in the seed planting activity, Adam in Year 5 from the suburban school,

seemed to consciously manipulate the soil between the tips of his fingers and thumb, acknowledging the texture and consistency of the potting mix. Marco and Tran in Year 3 from the inner city school consciously manipulated the materials of the bead creation activity, carefully selecting their colors and positioning these beads with care and skill. Tran deliberately ran his fingers across the pile of beads, consciously acknowledging their shape and texture. Marco painstakingly set about restoring his work when he had accidentally knocked some of the beads from their position on the template. These two children, while they seemed oblivious to the physical presence of others around them, appeared to be quite conscious of their own engagement in their task, and of their own senses acting upon the task.

The Year 5 children in the rural school also seemed to exhibit a conscious perception of bodily awareness in relation to their chosen activity. This group of children engaged in the jigsaw activity appeared to consciously move their finger tips across the jigsaw pieces, almost as if the resulting bodily sensation would somehow indicate the correct piece that might be required in order to complete a particular section. Although they used their sense of sight to search the array of patterns presented by the jigsaw pieces, they seemed to be relying on the wisdom of physical sensation inherent in their sense of touch and shape in locating the required pieces in order to attempt and complete this particular task. While they probably would not have possessed the language to name what they were doing in this way, they seemed to be quite conscious of their actions in relation to this act.

In this conscious bodily experience could be seen something of Thomas Merton's concept of ontological awareness (Del Prete, 2002). Merton maintained that an ontological way of knowing is a natural predisposition of humankind, although it is one that is largely neglected in Western culture. Ontological awareness is the ability to perceive with one's whole being in a direct, experiential and concrete way. In such a way of knowing, one enters the domain of holistic experience. That is, the whole of the individual is involved – mind, body and soul – without distinction or separation, as well as the whole of the experience in which one is engaged. This stands in contrast to the scholastic, Aristotelian philosophy that has prevailed in the West, assuming a capacity for distance, that is, to separate one's self from that which is being studied or considered. Ontological awareness is an integration of the whole person with the whole experience.

The seeds of ontological awareness could be seen in these children. In each case, their conscious bodily and tactile encounter with the materials they were manipulating were experiences that engaged their whole selves in direct, experiential and concrete ways. They were experiences that seemed to bridge the divide between the self and the object. For a short time, it seemed as if each of the children and the activity in which they were engaged had merged into a single entity. There seemed to be a definite connectedness between the child and the activity. It was as if the activity had become the child, and the child had become the activity. While they may not have been aware of the presence of others around them, it

seemed as though these children were ontologically aware of themselves and their connectedness to their chosen activity. This could be seen, for example, among the children from the suburban school. There was almost silence, apart from the sound of beads being placed onto the templates and the occasional trickle of water from the seed planting activity. Although their focus and engagement was intense, it was at the same time relaxing. The children did not appear anxious. They seemed calm, and were lost in the activity to which each was attending. In other words, they seemed to have become one with the activity.

This sense of connectedness and oneness could also be seen amongst the children from Year 3 in the inner city school. There was a definite sense in which their whole selves were absorbed in the corporeal activity to which each was attending. Although in the classroom context some of these children could at times be noisy, boisterous and active (as I had observed), they now appeared to be consumed with concentration. They were calm and quiet. They seemed to have become one with their chosen activity.

These experiences were holistic. They involved the children's whole being, and seemed to bridge the divides between mind, body, and spirit, and between the self and that which was not the self, or, everything that was other than the self (the Other). In these holistic experiences of connectedness, it was possible that these children were being led to a sense of their connectedness to the Other in the more cosmic dimensions – in creation, and possibly in the Transcendent. It is more than likely that the children themselves would not have been able to articulate this experience since it was more primal than thought or language (Gendlin, 1981). It was a tactile, sensorial and bodily experience of being whole. In this act of being, Merton might have said, these children had perhaps experienced something of the presence of God, for God had been present to them in the very act of their own being (Del Prete, 2002).

The sense of connectedness with the self and with everything Other than the self accords with the descriptions of spirituality that have been offered by recent scholarship (for example, de Souza, 2003; 2004; Fisher, 1999; Hay & Nye, 1998; Hyde, 2004c; O'Murchu, 1997; Tacey, 2000; 2003; Zohar & Marshall, 2000). *The felt sense*, as a characteristic of children's spirituality, seemed to entail the individual drawing upon the wisdom of the body, as a natural way of knowing, in order to sense this connectedness. Further, this perception of bodily awareness, although more primal than thought and words, and not capable of being expressed in language, appeared to be a conscious awareness on the part of the children. This may accord with Hay and Nye's (1998) notion of spirituality as *relational consciousness* – a conscious awareness of how one relates to the self and everything that is Other than the self. The children seemed to be consciously aware of their connectedness with the activity in which each was engaged. A reflection upon this characteristic of *the felt sense* through the lifeworld existential of lived body brings to the fore this relational feature. It is a conscious bodily awareness of one's connectedness to the self and everything that is Other than the self.

The Felt Sense and Lived Space

The Year 5 children in the suburban school and the Year 3 children in the inner city school, although seated in close proximity to one another seemed to be oblivious to the presence of their peers. The physical space that separated them was only a few feet, yet it could well have been more immense. The children seemed totally oblivious to the presence of their peers. It was almost as if the children had created for themselves a space that enabled them to focus their attention on their chosen activity. While not setting out to distance others by placing a boundary of sorts around themselves, it appeared that these children had created a space in which they could connect with their activity—in which they could become unified with it. This space could perhaps be regarded as sacred space. None of the other children attempted to enter the space that surrounded any one particular child and her or his activity. The space was honoured, almost revered.

This space was a space of quiet. It was a space of tranquility in a room surrounded by the hustle and bustle of the kind of daily activity that is characteristic of a primary school. It was a space that seemed to enable the children to enter experiences of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975); a space in which *the felt sense* could manifest itself, and in which the children could consciously attend to their perception of bodily awareness in relation to the activity in which each was engaged.

In the case of the Year 5 children in the rural school, a slightly different space seemed to be encountered. These children worked cooperatively in order to complete the jigsaw. Rather than the notion of a personal space, the space that these children seemed to create was a space of inclusion. This could be seen in the way that, for example, the arms and hands of these individual children physically crossed over each other—entering what might be regarded as the personal space of the other—in attempting to locate the correct interconnecting pieces of the puzzle. None of the children appeared concerned that their personal space had been intruded upon. In fact, it seemed a necessary occurrence if the activity was to be completed with success.

In this inclusive space, there was talking and an exchange of ideas in relation to the task in which the children were engaged. The space was honored, but in a different way from that described above. It was a space of common purpose. Those who entered the space espoused the same goal—to complete the puzzle. The talking, the movement of arms and hands in and across this space was focused in relation to the common goal of finishing the jigsaw, and in this way, the space continued to be honored. There seemed to be a communal flavor to this created space, and this appeared to enable the children to engage in the activity. In other words, the space that was created seemed to be *relational*. It was a space in which the children not only connected with the activity in which they were engaged, but in which they were also able to relate to each other in the shared purpose of completing the jigsaw.

In the individual and group activities described above, a space was created to contain both the personal and the communal. In the personal space, the children were able to connect with their activity; in the communal relational space each child had a particular place within the created space. There was also a particular quality

to the space that existed between each of the individual children, and the activity to which each was attending. Perhaps it might be better envisaged as a closing of space. There was a sense in which the space that separated each child from her or his chosen activity seemed to disintegrate as *the felt sense* led each child to an experience of unity with that activity. This could be seen in the cases of the Year 5 children in the suburban school and the Year 3 children in the inner city school. In both of these instances, each child became absorbed in the activity in which she or he was engaged. They became one with the task in which they were engaged. In this experience of unity, there was a sense in which the space that separated each child from the activity seemed to disappear as the whole self engaged in the whole activity. In this experience of connectedness with the self and with that which was Other than the self, the space of separation ceased to exist.

This seemed to be the case also with the Year 5 children in the rural school. Although there seemed to be a communal flavor to their engagement with their chosen activities, the space that existed between the children collectively and the jigsaw activity seemed to disappear as the children connected with, and became one with the task of completing the jigsaw. Again, the children seemed to enter a unified experience in which any separation by means of space between their collective selves and the object ceased to exist. It was a holistic experience—the whole self absorbed by the whole activity.

When *the felt sense*, as a characteristic of children's spirituality, became evident, the children seemed to create an appropriate space in which to honor the wisdom of their bodies as a primal source of knowledge. The space that was created was either of a personal relational nature, which enabled each individual child to connect with and become absorbed in their chosen activity, or the space that was created was communal and relational, enabling the children to connect both the activity to which they were attending, as well as with each other in the common purpose of completing the activity. Both of these types of spaces are needed in order to nurture spirituality. They enable, in the first instance, the self to internalise—to relate to the self primarily, as well as to the other, albeit in a prepared environment. These spaces also enable the self to relate to the other in community. That is to say, these spaces enable the self to both internalise and externalise. Potentially also, these spaces enable the self to go beyond the self, beyond the other in community and in the environment, so as to experience the Other in the Transcendent. These understandings again reflect the descriptions of spirituality as relational that have been discussed in recent literature.

The Felt Sense and Lived Time

In being absorbed in the activities to which they were engaged, each child was effectively attending to the here-and-now of the experience in which s/he was occupied. Each child appeared to be aware only of the present moment. For example, Marco from the inner city school seemed to focus his attention almost immediately. His comment 'I'm going to finish this' may perhaps have suggested that, for him,

time was not going to prevent the completion of this task. There was a sense in which time was literally going to stand still to enable him to complete his work. In this concentration and stillness, Marco was perhaps aware only of what he was doing—not of the passing of time.

This notion accords with the work of Donaldson (1992), who has referred to this immediacy of awareness as the *point mode*. As one of the most basic operations of the mind, point mode has prominence in children even after they have developed the capability to focus on the past and future of experience. These children seemed to be alert to that which was being experienced in their moment of concentration—the here-and-now of the experience in which they were engaged.

This immediacy of awareness of also evident in the Year 5 children from the rural school. These children, who had worked cooperatively as a group, were focused on the task of completing their jigsaw puzzle. They seemed not to have noticed the passing of time in attending to their activity. This became evident when I announced that it was almost time to finish. At this point, there were cries of disappointment, and looks of surprise that a particular passage of time must have passed. It seemed that, for them, time had somehow ‘sped up’ in their engagement in their chosen activity. These children seemed to experience the passing of time subjectively, rather than objectively. They apperceived a sense of unity, or wholeness with the activity to which they were attending. They were responding to the corporeal encounter of their activity in a temporal way, each with the whole of her/his being. Perhaps their holistic experience as a connectedness with their chosen activity was one that was literally timeless.

Thomas (2001) has referred to this notion of here-and-now time as an immediate temporal horizon. A temporal horizon constitutes how far ahead in time a person thinks, or plans. In contrast to adults, children have a limited concept of what it is to plan ahead in time. The temporal horizon of children is immediate. Although as children mature, engagement in the immediate temporal horizon gives way to *line mode* (Donaldson, 1992), that is the ability to focus on the past and future, these particular children, aged about 8 to 10 years old, seemed to indicate their ability to maintain a focus on the immediate temporal horizon when absorbed in an activity that engaged the whole of their being. While, as maturing children, their ability to focus on line mode was in all probability developing, in this instance, they were focusing on the present and immediate temporal horizon. There was perhaps a real sense in which, for them, time seemed to stand still as their consciousness focused on the activity at hand, rather than on the passing of time. It was in the immediate temporal horizon that the encounter between themselves and their activity was *relational*. It was in this particular experience of time that the divide between self and object—the space of separation—ceased to exist, resulting in a unified apperception.

The children’s focusing of awareness on the present moment enabled their *conscious* and *relational* interaction with their activity, and in some cases with each other, to occur. Again, these understandings reflect the descriptions of spirituality as relational found in contemporary literature.

The Felt Sense and Lived Relation

Each of the preceding three lifeworld existentials has given rise to the *relational* component of *the felt sense*. In each case the children referred to above seemed to be in relationship with the self and with everything Other than the self. Their conscious, corporeal and physical encounter led them to experience a sense of unity with the activity to which each was attending. They became one with that in which they were engaged.

The relationship between the Year 5 children from the rural school and jigsaw activity in which they were collectively engaged was experienced as ‘oneness’. In this case there was a particular quality to the relationship experienced between each of the children in that group. It was a relationship of common purpose. There was a sense in which these children became one with each other in their unified mission of completing the jigsaw. Each child, although distinct and inherently different from her or his peers, played a particular role in completing the jigsaw, and so became one *in* the task. Each used her or his individual talents and skills in the unified undertaking of the jigsaw puzzle. There was a sense in which each of these children became one body with many parts to play in the successful completion of this task (cf. Corinthians 12:12–27). Although individual children, they were united in spirit and common purpose. Whilst engaged in this activity nothing divided them. They could be seen to act as one in common purpose so that all would be praised and satisfied at the completion of the jigsaw.

The spaces these children seemed to create could have been described as *relational* spaces. The space that the children seemed to create around themselves enabled them to connect or relate intensely with their chosen activity. In this space they could become unified with their corporeal, physical task. Further, as this unified relational state was realised, the space between each child and their task ceased to exist. They had literally become one with the object—the task.

The immediacy of the present temporal horizon seemed to be a prerequisite for these conscious *relational* elements of *the felt sense*. It was in these that children attending to the here-and-now of experience encountered a sense of relatedness and connectedness to the Other. This relationality was expressed as connectedness to the self, to the other in terms of their peers, to the other in terms of the activity to which each was engaged, and potentially at least, to the Transcendent Other. Again, this accords with the descriptions of spirituality of recent scholarship. The children exhibited *the felt sense* characteristic in terms of the relationality that is described in contemporary literature.

A Possible Pedagogical Framework for Nurturing Spirituality in the Primary RE Classroom

The reflections above have important implications for religious education and the pedagogical approach that is employed at the primary school level to nurture spirituality. The characteristic of *the felt sense* suggests that children draw upon

the physical wisdom of their bodies as a fundamental source of knowledge. If *the felt sense* is a characteristic of children's spirituality, then perhaps it needs to be considered as integral, and as a possible starting point for a religious education program that seeks to nurture spirituality.

With this in mind, I would like to propose one possible pedagogical framework for nurturing the spirituality of children in primary religious education classrooms (Hyde, 2004b). This framework effectually and intentionally locates the activity of religious education within the greater ambit of spirituality (Griffith, 2003) by drawing upon the spiritual dimension of learning as the starting point, and moving then to introduce the other domains of learning, such as the affective and the cognitive. There are three moments to this proposed pedagogical framework.

Attending the Spiritual (*The Felt Sense*)

In this moment, activities are intentionally planned that draw on *the felt sense* as well as on other characteristics of children's spirituality. For example, intentionally planning activities that may enable students to enter experiences of flow and to attend to *the felt sense* may allow them to draw upon the physicality of their own bodies as a primal and legitimate source of knowledge. In a unit of work focusing on 'Creation', the educator might set the ambiance with quiet music and plan a series of sensory and tactile activities in which the students could engage in the very act of creating. Such activities might include painting, sculpting with clay, or building with materials such as LEGO. In this instance, these activities may enable the body, as a source of knowledge, to experience and name the act of creating, and of what it means to create something beautiful and unique.

In deliberately planning for these types of activities to occur, the educator is effectually providing experiences in which students might apperceive the sense of unity encountered by the children described in this chapter. Such experiences may bridge the divide between the self and everything that is Other than the self. The pupils and the activities in which they engage may merge into a single entity. This type of activity also enables educators to consciously plan opportunities that may act as a catalyst for the children themselves to create the types of spaces discussed in which their spirituality might be nurtured. Even the space created in the classroom by the teacher in this first moment of the pedagogical framework might be conducive to nurturing children's spirituality. Considerations given to the placement of furniture or the use of music and essential oils to create an ambiance may be drawn upon to achieve this purpose. The lighting of a candle may lead to the creation of a relational space in which children could be invited to pray, and to connect with the Transcendent.

Further, the planning of such activities may enable pupils to attend to the here-and-now of experience. This is important because the immediacy of awareness that the pupils may experience has been accomplished at more sophisticated levels by members of both Eastern and Western religious traditions. These have been apperceived by those who experience them as spiritual. For example in Theravada

Buddhism, the chief practice – *vipassana* or awareness meditation – is an intentional and disciplined attending to the here-and-now, achieved by focusing attention on the act of breathing in and out. Similarly, in the Christian tradition, certain forms of contemplative prayer require a focus on the here-and-now of experience in order for the individual to come to a realisation of the presence of God in all things. For example, Hay and Nye (1998) refer to the eighteenth century French Jesuit Jean Pierre de Causade and his notion of the ‘sacrament of the present moment’ (p. 62), in which the will of God is discerned not through reading or study, but through an individual’s experience of the Divine in the present moment. Planning activities and opportunities in which pupils can engage in the immediacy of awareness may enable them to apperceive spiritual experiences at basic levels, as well as enabling them to acquire the skills to achieve this at more sophisticated stages.

Attending to the Affective

Sound educational practice acknowledges the interrelatedness of all dimensions of knowing (de Souza, 2001; 2004; Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1964; Macdonald, 1995). A well-founded curriculum will present opportunities for addressing the spiritual, affective and cognitive dimensions of learning. The affective dimension of learning is concerned with the attitudes, values, reactions and feelings of students. The role of such emotions in the lives of students ought to be an important factor in the learning process (de Souza, 2004).

Addressing this affective dimension of learning in a unit of work focusing on ‘Creation’ might, for example, entail the educator providing opportunities for students to explore how it felt while creating and how it feels to have created. The initial experience of creating may allow the students opportunities to reflect and name for themselves the feelings associated with creating, and hence the development of positive attitudes and values in relation to creating. This could be undertaken creatively through discussion, through journal writing/drawing, or by drawing upon Berryman’s (1991) notion of group wondering, for example, ‘I wonder how you felt when you were creating...’

Attending to the Cognitive

The cognitive dimension of learning, with its focus upon knowledge, skills and abilities, can now be properly explored with the students. Having engaged the spiritual and affective dimensions which have provided common starting points and experiences in relation to the content of what is to be explicitly taught, the subject matter of the syllabus can now be explored in ways that connect with the students’ common experiences and constructions of meaning.

For example, having established some common experiences of creating and of what it might have felt like to create, the educator can now present and explore the cognitive content of the Catholic Faith tradition. Following the example of a unit

of work on 'Creation', the educator might, having provided experiences of what it felt like to create, present and explore initially with students the first account of creation from the Book of Genesis, particularly focusing on the repeated phrase 'And God saw that it was good.' From here, the notion of humankind as being co-creators with God might also be investigated, stressing the integration of the heart and intellect, with a focus on relational life with self, others, the environment, and God.

The three phases outlined above do not demand any one specific learning and teaching methodology. They represent a construction that intentionally begins with the spiritual dimension. This construction has its origin in a spiral, rather than a linear framework of learning (Wright, 2000). In a spiral framework of learning, the students may continually circle around a particular theme or topic, beginning with the spiritual and moving to the affective and cognitive dimensions, returning to the spiritual with new understandings and moving again to the affective and cognitive dimensions. In this way the students are continually building upon their new learning and understanding.

For example, in the unit of work focused on 'Creation', the educator might return to the spiritual by providing opportunities for students to view a series of art work or panoramic photographs depicting the grandeur of God's creation, thereby engaging the pupil's sense of wonder and awe. This might be followed by an exploration of humankind's general attitude towards the natural world, and some of the ways in which people have and have not cared for creation. This in turn could lead to a study of some of the key phrases from Psalm 148 (Cosmic Hymn of Praise) and of the ways in which they might act as stewards of God's creation. In developing the unit along these lines, a relational focus on the self, the other in community, the other in the environment, and the Transcendent Other, is maintained.

Emanating from the findings of my own research, this construction represents one attempt to nurture the spirituality of children in the RE classroom by intentionally beginning with a characteristic of children's spirituality, and drawing upon this as a means by which to engage the affective and cognitive domains. What has been presented here is by no means exhaustive and indicates the need for further exploration into the ways in which religious educators might seek to genuinely nurture the spirituality of their students in the primary RE classroom. The result of such an undertaking may be a religious education curriculum that has, as its primary purpose, the spiritual maturity of children, and a clear focus on relational life with self, the other in community, the other in the cosmos, and the Transcendent Other.

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MARY IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Dr. Sandra Carroll

Australian Catholic University, Sydney

Introduction

The person and symbol of Mary is central to Catholic identity and spirituality. Mary has been strong in the Catholic imagination since the fifth century and this woman of Nazareth is likely to remain a focus of prayer, devotion and theological reflection. Mary acts as a powerful symbol and, as a symbol, Mary is more problematic than Jesus. We know so little about the person, Mary of Nazareth, that the symbol quite easily lends itself to social and cultural constructions. Scripture works as a reference point for Jesus. Mary however is a more elusive topic because in the absence of primary material the symbol of Mary has the potential for all sorts of personal, communal and cultural projections.

Acknowledging the insights into the person and symbol of Mary provided by contemporary scriptural scholarship, this chapter provides educational perspectives and theological foundations for teaching about Mary in the Catholic Tradition. Through an educational lens the importance of the social location of both the teacher and the student in the teaching/learning process is recognised. The chapter then highlights the interconnection between Marian liturgical celebrations, theological reflection and the development of doctrine. Finally the challenging area of teaching about Marian apparitions is addressed.

The gospels were written in light of the resurrection of Jesus. According to Tambasco (1984) gospel texts that speak of Mary, especially the infancy narratives and John's Gospel are often less concerned with historical accuracy than interpretation of the meaning of events for salvation. Thus the search for the historical Mary is even more problematic than the quest for the historical Jesus. More important though is the symbol of Mary as a woman of faith and discipleship. Tambasco (1984) says we find in Luke and John a theological description of Mary who stands

at the fullness of her human perfection, sharing in the life of the risen Lord. 'Even exegetes who would be more cautious about affirming anything of the historical Mary hesitate to say that the symbols come totally out of theological imagination with no foundation in the real person of Mary' (Tambasco, 1984, p. 17). He argues further, as there is some continuity between the historical Jesus and the risen Lord, it seems likely that the biblical text presents the attitudes of a Mary who lived in faith during her life, although the text does not record many events.

Cunneen (1996) writes 'Mary has entered mainstream discussion at the same time that Catholics themselves, particularly women, are divided in their attitudes to the mother of Jesus' (p. xv). She thinks that currently Mary is not easily understood, many people are ambivalent about her, and some even hostile. Today's Catholics hold a great variety of attitudes to Mary, Cunneen believes, 'from unintended neglect to excessive adulation, but the old sense of cosy familiarity is gone' (1996, p. 10). Some feminist theologians acknowledge that in spite of exaggerations and debilities, the Marian tradition has carried one of the few female focused symbols which has persisted in the Christian community. As Carr (1989) writes:

She is at once that little-known historical person who walked the journey to faith in Christ, and she is the figure of the Church on its Spirit-filled pilgrim journey in time. She is a symbol of the communion of saints (with whom she is often pictured), and of the eschatological goal of Christian life in the mutuality and reciprocity that is the life of God (p. 15).

An accessible contemporary approach suitable for teachers, is provided by Elizabeth Johnson in her book *Truly Our Sister* (2003). She is concerned with reclaiming the ongoing relevance of Mary in Catholic Tradition. For Johnson, Mary is grounded in a real person, the Jewish woman of Nazareth. Apart from Theotokos (Mary as mother of God), teachings about Mary reflect an ecclesial perspective that function as symbols of a Church fully redeemed. Johnson's critique of the Marian tradition is that Mary as a symbol of the Church has been inappropriately used as a model of a perfect woman, that is a human being of female gender. This came about through a retrojection on to Mary of Nazareth all the imagined characteristics of a perfect woman. Mary then functions as a model to be imitated by women. This dynamic creates a conundrum for women imitating a model that is, simultaneously, both a mother and a virgin.

Johnson wishes to liberate the symbol of Mary so that Mary may truly be a living and liberating symbol for contemporary women and men. Johnson's view is that theological statements about Mary are best seen within their Christological and ecclesial contexts. Johnson argues that honouring Mary in the communion of saints means she symbolises the belief that all baptised are related to each other through Christ. This is consistent with the direction of Vatican II and Pope Paul VI in *Marialis Cultus* and with the contemporary re-imaging of Mary as one in solidarity with those who suffer.

An Educational Perspective

In an educational context there is a need to be conscious of the social and political effects of the way Mary is used as a symbol while maintaining her symbolic importance for Christian life. Religious Education teachers in Catholic schools hold a variety of attitudes and knowledge about the person and symbol of Mary. These range through the spectrum from pious over-emphasis to disregard. When separated from mainstream Catholicism, popular movements can emerge in a teaching vacuum with sometimes distorted and exaggerated understandings of Mary. In a religious education context we need to examine the exaggerated, sometimes distorted, idealising Mariology of the past and acknowledge the harm done to women by images of Mary's passivity. Mary is an image of womanhood that is problematic for many contemporary Western women. For some teachers, Mary is an ambivalent symbol. There is a need for teachers to be self-reflective about their knowledge and attitudes about Mary. It is important for educators to critically reflect upon their understanding of Mary, its origins and implications, if they are to develop appropriate teaching/ learning strategies. Relevant approaches and strategies for teaching about Mary need to be informed, balanced and consistent with Catholic Church teaching while demonstrating awareness of insights from contemporary feminism.

Mary can be a complex topic to teach. Many people experience difficulties, even alienation, with regard to traditional Marian images and piety. In a school setting it is imperative that teachers explore and acknowledge the potential differences and difficulties between themselves and their students that are linked to gender, cultural and generational factors. For educators teaching this topic, self awareness is vital. They need to situate themselves with regard to what factors have shaped their attitude to the person and symbol of Mary. Just as important in teaching about Mary is that the educators have an understanding of the social location of their students, particularly their gender and cultural and socio-economic background.

Theological Foundations: Mary in Church Teaching and Liturgy

Since the 5th century there have been regional celebrations and special feast days in honour of Mary in all Christian countries (Eberthausen, Haag, Kirchberger, & Solle, 1998). The theological foundation for this section is an exploration of the relationship between the development of doctrine, popular devotion, liturgical text and history. The focus is four central Church teachings/liturgical events, which are celebrated as solemnities of Mary, Mother of God (January 1), the Annunciation (March 25), the Assumption (August 15) and the Immaculate Conception (December 8). Pope Paul VI in *Marialis Cultus* (1974, n.6) wrote that these Solemnities 'mark with the highest liturgical rank the main dogmatic truths concerning the Handmaid of the Lord'. These are examined according to the origin of the doctrinal/liturgical event, the cultural context of its proclamation as dogma/feast and how the teaching/feast might be understood today.

Mother of God, January 1st

The teaching that Mary is mother of God has been the starting point for theological reflection about Mary and is the basis of all other teaching about her in the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Anglican churches. The title *Theotokos*, in Greek 'Godbearer', was given to the mother of Jesus at the third ecumenical Church council at Ephesus in 431. The word consists of two elements; *Theos* (God) and *tokos* (a creature who gives birth). At Ephesus the term was used to address the controversy over the unity of the two natures, human and divine in the person of Jesus Christ. It expressed the belief that if Jesus is God's Word incarnate then she who gave birth to him can be called the Mother of God. Within the one divine person Jesus Christ, both Son of God and Son of Man, two natures are conjoined. O'Carroll (1982) sees *Theotokos* expressing the 'truth that motherhood implies relationship to the person of the child, therefore, in this case, to a divine person, which makes Mary the Mother of God' (p. 258).

The title Theotokos is found in the oldest known prayer to the Virgin, which is written in Greek on an Egyptian papyrus, and probably dates from some time during the 4th-5th centuries. The prayer says, 'Beneath your mercy we take refuge, O Mother of God. Do not reject our supplications in time of necessity, but deliver us from danger; you alone, pure, alone blessed.' Given the Egyptian origin of the term, O'Carroll (1982, p. 342) acknowledges it may have been influenced by the title 'mother of god' for Isis in regard to *Orus*.

By the end of the sixth century in Rome, January 1 was regarded as a feast honouring Mary (Boss, 1997). In *Marialis Cultus*, Pope Paul VI directed that the revised ordering of the Christmas period should attend to the restored Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God. 'This celebration, placed on 1 January in conformity with the ancient indication of the liturgy of the City of Rome, is meant to communicate the part played by Mary in this mystery of salvation' (n. 5).

As an indication of a contemporary understanding of this doctrine, in the current Prayer after Communion for the celebration of the Solemnity we find the following 'Father as we proclaim the Virgin Mary to be the Mother of Christ and the Mother of the Church'. This prayer clearly signals the ecclesial significance of this doctrine and feast. The history of the development of the dogma of Mary, Mother of God is essentially a theological statement, philosophically developed to affirm the divinity of Jesus.

The Annunciation, March 25th

The feast of the Annunciation is firmly based in Scripture. The gospel proclaimed for the feast is Luke 1:26-38. The literary form of gospel weaves together a variety of literary and rhetorical elements. The infancy narrative of Jesus' birth makes use of Old Testament annunciation patterns. Examples include announcements to Abraham of Isaac's birth (Gen 17), to Samson's parents (Judg 13), to Moses (Exod 3) and to Gideon (Judg 6). In making use of this Old Testament pattern Luke is clearly alluding to these references. It is also likely that the words of the angel to Mary echo the words of the early church about Jesus after his resurrection.

The feast of the Annunciation was celebrated in Constantinople in the 5th century and probably brought to the West by monks fleeing Islam. Originally celebrated on Ash Wednesday, it was moved to nine months before Christmas, the spring equinox in the Northern Hemisphere. Though Pope Sergius I organised a candlelight procession early in the 8th Century, it was not till the 11th century that the tradition spread, becoming popular in England and the Netherlands (Eberthausen et al., 1998).

Recalling the conception of Jesus as an historical event, this feast proclaims the annunciation story and highlights and celebrates the ongoing significance of this event in the life of the Church. An opening prayer for the feast of the Annunciation in the Latin Rite encapsulates this significance.

Almighty Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

You have revealed the beauty of your power by exalting the lowly virgin of Nazareth and making her the mother of our Saviour.

May the prayers of this woman bring Jesus to the waiting world and fill the void of incompleteness with the presence of her child.

The words of this prayer express an eschatological hope. The mystery of redemption is not simply a past event, but has ongoing implications as the fruits of redemption are being realised. Mary's continuing role in this mystery is as one who now prays for the filling the 'void of incompleteness' with the presence of her child, Jesus Christ.

Paul IV refers to the annunciation as a joint feast of both Christ and Mary. In celebrating this feast the Church honours and affirms the continuing role of Mary as it waits in eschatological hope for the completion of the saving event recounted in the story of a visit from an angel to a virgin in Nazareth. Liturgies of both East and West, celebrate it as the culminating moment in the saving dialogue between God and humanity 'and as a commemoration of the Blessed Virgin's free consent and cooperation in the plan of redemption' (*Marialis Cultus*, n. 6).

The Assumption, August 15th

The dogma that Mary was taken into heaven was promulgated by Pope Pius XII in the papal bull *Munificentissimus Deus* on November 1, 1950. This dogma states that Mary ever Virgin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken body and soul into the glory of heaven. The teaching avoids the question of whether Mary actually died but declares that Mary in the fullness of her historical personality lives now in union with the risen Christ. Pope Paul VI refers to the Assumption as a feast of Mary's destiny of fullness and blessedness, 'a feast which sets before the eyes of the Church and of all mankind the image and consoling proof of the fulfilment of their final hope' (*Marialis Cultus*, n. 6).

There is no mention of the assumption of Mary in Scripture or patristic writings. Coyle (1996, 44f) notes the writings of Epiphanius (d. 403) first raised the question of Mary's death and that 'as early as the fifth century there was a strong conviction that Mary's body did not corrupt in the tomb, but was taken up shortly after death, reunited with its soul and transformed by the power of the Spirit' (1996,

p. 45). According to Johnson (1995, p. 105), by the 6th century, belief in Mary's assumption was associated with celebration of her feast day which like other saints was on the day of her death. This feast coalesced with an apocryphal narrative (*Transitus Mariae*) that gave accounts of her death, funeral, empty tomb and bodily entrance into heaven.

Preaching and devotional literature played an important role in the development of this doctrine. Sermons linked the extraordinary vocation and holiness of Mary to an exceptional final destiny. In the West during the Middle Ages there was resistance to the idea that the flesh that gave birth to Christ should be 'consumed by worms'. Scholastic reasoning was used (*potuit, voluit, fecit*): he could do it, he willed to do it, and he did it.

Johnson signals the importance of the wider context with regard to the proclamation of this doctrine.

Alluding to the bloody world wars of the twentieth century and the growth of materialism, the document deplores how the destruction of life and desecration of the human body, and moral corruption threaten to obviate our human sense of our God-given identity (1995, p. 105).

Pope Pius XII's proclamation of the bodily assumption of Mary on November 1st 1950, just five years after the dropping of the atom bomb and the full realisation of the extent of the Holocaust was a reaffirmation and reclamation of the importance of the human body.

It is Catholic teaching that to proclaim Mary's assumption as a dogma of faith is to affirm that she now shares in the fullness of the resurrection. Mary's assumption depends totally on Christ's resurrection: the glory she has now is our hope.

In the bodily and spiritual glory which she possesses in heaven, the Mother of Jesus continues in this present world as the image and first flowering of the Church as she is to be perfected in the world to come. Likewise, Mary shines forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come, as a sign of sure hope and solace for the pilgrim People of God (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 68).

The Immaculate Conception

This feast/doctrine refers to the belief that, from the moment of her conception, Mary was exempted from original sin. A common misunderstanding is that the 'Immaculate Conception' refers to the conception of Jesus. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (n. 491) states 'Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, 'full of grace' through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception'. Quoting from the documents of Vatican II, the *Catholic Catechism* (n. 492) says her unique holiness is wholly from Christ, she is 'redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son' (*Lumen Gentium* n. 56). The catechism (n. 493) draws upon the Eastern tradition that calls Mary 'the All-Holy' (*Panagia*) and is celebrated as free from all sin, original and

personal. Coyle (1996) writes that the celebration of the Immaculate Conception is the result of a long historical evolution in popular devotion that asserted itself against the opposition of theologians and bishops. 'The gradual acceptance of Mary's holiness, as expressed in the term 'immaculate conception' was more the result of popular Christian piety and prayer than scholarly, theological reflection' (Coyle, 1996, p. 37).

History of the Development of the Dogma

The history of the development of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception illustrates the dynamic relationship between popular devotion, theological reflection and official Church teaching. The feast of Mary's nativity was first celebrated in the East in the second half of the 6th century and by the 7th century a feast of Mary's conception was celebrated. O'Carroll (1982) links the origins of this feast to an apocryphal story of the miraculous conception of Mary. Johnson (1995) writes that in the West, the Eve-Mary antitheses with its death-life, sin-grace polarity that influenced patristic thought, prepared the way for the introduction of the feast of Mary's Immaculate Conception in 11th century England.

Eberthausen et al. (1998) write that the Immaculate Conception celebrated on December 8, was the most important Marian festival that emerged during the High Middle Ages. The Franciscans and later the Jesuits were the major promoters of this feast which was universally celebrated by the 14th century. In 1439 the Council of Basle gave its support to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. 'The importance of the feast in the development of doctrine was immense. It ensured a foundation which is always indispensable to doctrine, the *sensus fidei*, the conviction of the faithful' O'Carroll (1982, p. 180). The feast day became a holy day of obligation in 1708, long before the doctrine was proclaimed a dogma in the papal bull of December 8, 1854.

Theological Basis of the Dogma

Augustine's view of original sin, with its biological basis, underpinned the traditional understanding of the Immaculate Conception. In the twelfth century, Eadmer (d 1130), (cited in Coyle, 1996, p. 37) argued that Mary's Immaculate Conception was—*Potuit, deuit, fecit*: (it was possible, it was fitting, and therefore it was done). Coyle (1996) argues that this principle was behind much exaggerated speculation applied to Mary. Aquinas and Bernard of Clairvaux, insisting on the universality of redemption, thought that if Mary was conceived without original sin she would not need to be saved. Duns Scotus (1264–1308) (cited in Coyle, 1996, p. 38) offered a way around this objection with his idea of preservative redemption. He saw original sin as a privation in our human nature and that this privation did not exist for Mary. Mary's redemption was thus anticipatory. For Duns Scotus Mary was preserved from sin rather than freed from sin. Years of hostile debate

followed. Ebertshauser et al. note that after continuing disputes between the Jesuits and the Dominicans, in 1616 Pope Paul V forbade all further discussion of the topic (1998, p. 173).

Warner (1990) writes that during the 18th century, as the intellectuals deserted the Church, belief in the Immaculate Conception was 'an act of defiance against rationalism on behalf of a priori methods of deduction and a believer's blow struck for faith against empiricism and reason' (p. 237). Faced with the rise of rationalism, Church leaders attempted to assert their authority by emphasising belief in what was seen to be revealed.

During the Enlightenment and the French Revolution Marian piety declined. The revival, according to O'Carroll (1982, p. 182) was linked to the apparition tradition of the Miraculous Medal in 1830. The movement towards the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was helped by the spreading prayer movement, whose formula was 'O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee'. After seeking advice from the bishops around the world, Pope Pius IX proclaimed *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854:

The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of all-mighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin' (Pope Pius IX, 185, p. 24).

A Contemporary Understanding of the Immaculate Conception

Ineffabilis Deus is proclaimed in language consistent with mid 19th century Catholic dogmatic theology. It has an impersonal, negative tone which Coyle (1996, p. 39) says makes it 'too removed from the ordinary life experience of most Christians to be appreciated for its meaning'. The notion of stain expresses Augustine's teaching about the effects of original sin in the human person. According to Augustine with the sin of Adam and Eve evil came into the world. Coyle (1996, p. 39) summarises Augustine's view of the effects of Original sin, 'humanity was no longer oriented to the good. Desire, a natural tendency, becomes, after 'the fall' an enslaving concupiscence', passed onto every person at the moment of conception. An original condition of human integrity had been lost. Coyle (1996) outlines a contemporary view of original sin that sees us come into a world already shaped by sinful situations. Evil and hurt can have a generational impact.

Our worldviews and biases, and those of our culture, are passed on to the next generation, which unconsciously internalises them. Sin has incarnated itself in values, in customs, in prejudices and biases, in wrong convictions, and in unjust institutions and structures of society (Coyle, 1996, p. 41).

Christians believe that God's grace actualised in the redemptive love of Christ empowers human beings to break the cycle of evil. The dogma of Mary's original sinlessness celebrates God's victory over the power of evil and sin. Through the gracious mercy of God the hold of evil is broken.

The symbol of the immaculate conception shows that even the accumulated sinfulness of the world cannot overcome God's desire to save. It is therefore an eschatological symbol, a strong foundation for Christian hope, and a powerful impetus to a Christian commitment to justice in a world of global violence and exploitation (Coyle, 1996, p.42).

In *Marialis Cultus* (1974), Pope Paul VI links the Immaculate Conception to Advent and 'the basic preparation (cf. Isa 11:1–10) for the coming of the Saviour and of the happy beginning of the Church' (n. 3). The commemoration of Mary in the annual liturgical cycle is suggested 'as a norm for preventing any tendency (as has happened at times in certain forms of popular piety) to separate devotion to the Blessed Virgin from its necessary point of reference—Christ' (n. 4).

Marian Apparitions

Marian apparitions have been an important expression of popular religion for many centuries and continue to be significant for many Catholics today. The importance of understanding the difference between appropriate devotion and excesses of devotion is a worthwhile area for investigation in the Religious Education context. Reports of Mary's appearing on earth can engage students' interest. Ryan (1994, p. 50) points out apparitions can be a problem for teachers who face the dilemma of wanting to be faithful to Church teaching while not presenting a naive understanding of the significance of these reports. Ryan (1994) suggests that teachers are often uncertain about the status and meaning of these events. An educational framework that involves students' discussion and analysis of selected Marian apparitions, assisted by teachers' informed understanding of the Church's position is outlined below.

It is Catholic teaching that with the death of the last Apostle 'the closing of revelation' occurred. McBrien (1994, p. 268) points out this means that the Christ-event, 'the definitive and normative self-communication of God by which all other communications are to be measured and tested', has already taken place. There is a clear difference between the appearances of Mary and those of the Risen Christ attested by the gospel accounts. 'The private appearances reported in the course of the history of the Church, even those of Christ, are not guaranteed by the authority of revelation or the infallible *magisterium* of the church' (Bur, 1994, p. 123).

Marian apparitions fall into the category of private revelations. Even if approved by the Church, private revelations are never binding on other Catholics. No Catholic is required to believe in private revelations such as the Marian apparitions of Lourdes and Fatima, which have been approved by the Church for devotional purposes.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states

Throughout the ages there have been so-called private revelations, some of which have been recognised by the authority of the Church. They do not belong, however, to the deposit of faith. It is not their role to improve or complete Christ's definitive Revelation, but to help [people] live more fully by it in a certain period of history. Guided by the magisterium of the Church, the *sensus fidelium* knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church (Holy See, n. 67).

O'Carroll (1982) says private revelation involves no-one but the favoured person and as such private disclosures, being less open to critical evaluation, can be prone to distortion, projection, illusion and misinterpretation. Private revelation becomes an issue when a person claims that the messages they have received are intended for others. Church authorities become involved because private messages must be related to public revelation. Official approval simply indicates that the Church does not regard belief in the apparition to be misguided or harmful. According to Ryan (1994) investigations try to establish that the reported apparition and associated activities are not linked to fraud, manipulation, intent to deceive, demonic intent or psychological imbalance. 'The norms of critical history must be strictly applied; the resources of normal and paranormal psychology, fully used. Error can enter at any stage of the alleged communication' (O'Carroll, 1982, p. 48).

Criteria for Discernment

On February 25, 1978, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued *Norms for the Congregation for Proceeding in Judging Presumed Apparitions and Revelation*. This document, approved by Pope Paul VI, provided criteria to be followed by the members of an investigative committee constituted by the bishop of the place where the alleged apparitions occur. Jelly (1993) outlines both positive and negative criteria. The first of the positive criteria requires that moral certainty, or at least great probability, of the existence of the miraculous must be established by means of serious investigation. The second criterion deals with the personal qualities of the subjects who claim to have the apparition: their mental equilibrium, honesty, moral attitude, sincerity; their attitude of obedience to ecclesiastical authority; their ability to return to the normal practice of faith. The third positive criterion deals with the content of the revelation or message: it must be theologically and morally true and free of error. The fourth positive criterion is that the apparition must produce sound devotion and rich spiritual fruits which last.

The first negative criterion regards any obvious error relating to the fact of the occurrence, that is, doubt about whether what is transpiring is truly exceptional. The second negative test would be any attributing of doctrinal error to God or to

the Blessed Virgin Mary. The third negative criterion would be any evident seeking of financial advantage directly connected with the presumed apparition. The fourth negative sign would be seriously immoral acts committed at the time or on the occasion of the alleged appropriation by the visionaries and their followers. The fifth negative sign would be any mental illness or psychopathic tendencies in the visionary, which would surely have an influence on the presumed supernatural fact or occurrence itself.

The following questions could be used in classroom discussion about private revelation

1. Is the revelation consistent with the public revelation of Sacred Scripture and of the official interpretations of that revelation by the Church
2. Does the private revelation work building up the Body of Christ and the human family, or is it finally divisive?
3. Does the private revelation contribute to our knowledge of God and of our human responsibilities, or is it merely concerned with the unusual and the bizarre?
4. Are the bearers of the private revelation themselves good examples and witnesses of integral Christian and human existence, or are they odd, eccentric, and difficult to deal with?
5. Is the devotional practice arising from the alleged private revelation approved by the local bishop, who has responsibility for the faith and good order of the diocese? (McBrien, 1994, p. 268).

Jelly (1993) emphasises the need for a proper perspective even with approved apparitions. He writes:

We cannot build our faith on the sand of alleged apparitions and private revelations, regardless of how well intentioned the individuals involved might be. If we believe that our salvation depends on what is found in private revelation, or if we place - with vain credulity or naiveté-our confidence in private revelations, we are mistaken and not building our faith on a solid foundation, namely the Word of God, Scripture, tradition, and the teaching of the Church (Jelly, 1993, p. 55).

Pelikan (1996) cites a catalogue published in 1962 of the Marian apparitions that have been ecclesiastically acknowledged to be worthy of pious belief. The list of 10 in chronological order includes: Guadalupe in Mexico to Juan Diego on 9–12 December 1531; to Sister Catherine Laboure in Paris, on 17 November 1830; Lourdes to Bernadette Soubirous on 1 February–16 July 1858; Fatima to three children, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta on 13 May–13 October 1917. Ryan (1994) notes that Marian appearances at Garabandal in Spain and Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina though investigated, have not resulted in official approval.

Critiques of Marian Apparitions

There are two main critiques of Marian apparitions. The first refers to the dominant cultural script that permeates the milieu cultural in which the apparitions are reported to have occurred. The second refers to the social and political implications of the Marian messages that accompany many of the apparitions.

Cultural anthropologist Bruce Malina (1990) sees Marian apparitions as culturally specific understandable only to those influenced by Mediterranean cultural scripts. He believes that from the viewpoint of American experience, 'mainstream, non-ethnically oriented persons lack the experience of the cultural elements such apparitions presume: Mediterranean motherhood, gender division of labour, mother-son symbiosis, patron-client system and the like' (Malina, 1990, p. 76). According to Malina, in societies where female roles and aspirations no longer resonate with Mediterranean symbolism, the decline of the Marian cult is because of cultural irrelevance. Indeed he writes that theologically, 'ascription of omnipotence and omnipresence to Mary is simply repugnant to reflective, educated persons' (1990, p. 76). Some teachers as reflective educated persons may agree with him and see the popular ascriptions of omnipotence and omnipresence to Mary, which comes about as a result of reported apparitions as simply repugnant. Other ethnically - orientated teachers influenced by Mediterranean cultural scripts may not critically evaluate Marian apparitions and so over - emphasise their importance.

Although during 'the great century of Marian Apparitions' (1830–1930), reported appearances of Mary have been mainly to laypeople and peasants, the conservative political agenda of these apparitions has been discussed by Pope (1985), and more recently Balasuriya (1997). Pope (1985) notes that in her Immaculate Conception, Mary opposed not only Satan but also Republicans and materialist ideas. As Queen of heaven, she was also seen as Queen of France. Balasuriya (1997) from a post-colonial Sri Lanka, asks why Mary, appearing at Lourdes, does not comment on the harm done in Africa by French military and economic expansion or the condition of the French working classes. Similarly, while Mary's appearances in Fatima in 1917 was regarded as a warning against the threat of atheistic communism, Balasuriya writes:

At the same time, however, Portugal was exploiting Africans in Angola and Mozambique. Yet Mary seemed to say nothing about the internal and external evils of the Portuguese regime. This Mary, who comes to us in apparitions, and who is accepted by the dominant establishment, is not a liberating Mary (1997, p. 31).

The evaluation of the phenomena of Marian apparitions remains ambivalent. Cuneen (1996) for example, notes a sense of economic vulnerability, loneliness and ill health among the mainly female viewers of apparitions. She sees that their visions have functioned as a resource for these women who lack power and office. Coyle (1996) observes that many Marian apparitions occur in very poor countries or difficult socio-economic situations. Ryan (1994, p. 24) lists some common historical and

social circumstances, for example, war such as at Fatima in 1917, poverty such as to Juan Diego in Mexico City, and troubled family situations to Bernadette at Lourdes. Mary's presence has been seen as a sign of hope, offering comfort to people's lives.

Marian apparitions remain popular. Between one and two million people are said to visit shrines at Fatima, Lourdes and Medjugorje annually, while the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City sees 12 million yearly visitors. According to Shinnars (1989, p. 162) faith operates between the poles of certainty and doubt, popular religion on the other hand tries to escape doubt and reach for certainty. Marian apparitions with their miraculous images and healings function to serve a popular need. In his discussion of the characteristics of popular religion, Shinnars (1989, p. 162) identifies the following as present in the popular cult of Mary: it seeks tangible proof of divine presence and looks for effective ways to tap divine power; it relies on physical signs and wonders as proof of the divine; material objects (relics, rosaries dipped in Lourdes water, scapulars, images) are employed as conduits of divine power; it offers contractual relationships, in return for some form of payment (pilgrimage or penance) God will bestow favours; and it is emotionally focused.

The popular apocalyptic ideology of apparitions is seen as related to the world-view of the participants. Shinnars (1989, p. 176) argues that often when people feel compelled to predict the end of the world, what they really mean is that the world in which they feel comfortable—their world—has already ended. 'Modern Marian apparitions consistently see existing society as corrupted by change. They wax nostalgic for the stability, comfort, and predictability of tradition, especially Catholic Tradition' (Shinnars, 1989, p. 176). Yet in spite of the apocalyptic warnings, Mary remains very human and approachable, combining the roles of mother, comforter and counsellor with forgiving and consoling qualities.

O'Neill writes that apparitions

present challenging new questions concerning the nature of personal religious experience and its movement into the Church's public worship: the manifestation of divine intentions for humanity in images and symbols that reach new ages with new cultural settings; the need for the feminine in a world run-down by the triumph of the masculine; the place of apocalypticism in a civilisation of comfort; and the tension between the personal testimony of those outside the power structures and the hierarchical assessment of what is good for the whole Church (1995, p. 82).

To conclude, teachers should acknowledge the importance of the historical and social circumstances of Marian apparitions and be aware of critiques from cultural and socio-political perspectives. There remains a certain ambivalence regarding the phenomena of Marian apparitions. With an informed balanced approach the issues raised present an opportunity for students to explore the relationship between personal religious experience and public worship. The phenomena of Marian apparitions with its elements of popular religion can at times be problematic for the

Church's hierarchical power structures. The phenomena of Marian apparitions is worthy of serious examination. They shape and influence the life and faith of many believers as evidenced by the continuing popularity of pilgrims to apparition sites and their associated devotional practices.

Johnson (2003, p. 101) reminds us that the reference point for any discussion, reflection and teaching about Mary must be anchored to the first century historical person, Mary of Nazareth. The educational perspective offered in this chapter suggests that social analysis, an awareness of the social location of both educators and students should underpin teaching about Mary in any religious education context. The dynamic relationship between the development of doctrine and liturgical celebration was explored with reference to the four major Marian solemnities in the Catholic tradition. The focus then moved to Marian apparitions as private revelation pointing out that official approval indicates that the Church does not regard belief in apparitions to be misguided or harmful. Criteria for judging alleged apparitions were outlined with possible classroom discussion questions provided. In exploring the symbol of Mary educators and students imitate the person of Mary in her journey of faith. Mary is then seen as a person in solidarity with humanity, offering a sign of hope for all, connected rather than remote. As Pope Paul VI writes in *Marialis Cultus* 'For it is impossible to honour her who is 'full of grace', without honouring in oneself the state of grace, which is friendship with God' (1974, n. 57).

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EDUCATION IN PRAYER —RECOMMENDATIONS FROM RESEARCH

Vivienne Mountain

Firbank Grammar, Melbourne, Australia

Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion and offers some recommendations based on the findings of a research project which investigated children's perception about prayer as well as the affective domain of the prayer life of children (Mountain, 2004). As the first Australian research project on children's perception of the meaning and function of prayer, the findings may, potentially, inform the work of professionals involved in student welfare and education.

Five male and five female participants were selected from each of six different schools in the Melbourne metropolitan area which reflected some of the diverse philosophical and religious traditions found in contemporary Australian society. These were: the Catholic, Independent (Christian), Christian (Parent-Controlled or Community School), Orthodox Jewish, Islamic and the Government schools. The education system in Melbourne, Australia, comprises both government and independent schools. The free government system educates approximately two thirds of the students, and is 'secular' in that no employed teacher may teach religion. However, there is legal provision for volunteer teachers accredited by religious traditions to come into the schools and provide religious education for 30 minutes each week as a non-compulsory subject. In the government school used in this research a teacher from the Joint Board of Christian Education taught in the school. The independent schools in Melbourne educate one third of the students. These are fee paying schools, most of whom were established by, and have ongoing links with, religious traditions. In total there were 60 participants from primary school Year Five (10–12 years) who participated in semi-structured interviews which were video-recorded. Students completed a drawing exercise and a written sentence completion exercise as part of the interview, and the three sources of data were analysed qualitatively using the method of Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1967,

1998). The data was interpreted in the light of a detailed literature review on the nature and function of prayer as part of children's spirituality, religious education and contemporary Australian life.

As well as providing Australian data on the meaning and function of prayer for children, the study provided data on the perception of how prayer is learned. Considerable agreement was observed through the data, between children educated in a variety of school systems which embraced different philosophical and faith traditions. In the multicultural Australian community which is perceived as being secularised, prayer for these children has been shown as a valued aspect of life. The personal experiences of prayer for many were seen to be associated with the community of faith to which the participants belonged, and for others, prayer was learnt eclectically and practised in a private individualistic manner. All participants indicated that they had prayed and all contributed ideas about prayer through the interviews. All participants perceived prayer to function as an aid in life. Prayer was used by participants at significant moments in their lives, and the words or thoughts in prayer helped to clarify and articulate deep feelings.

Context

The investigation of the perception of the meaning and function of prayer with the associated awareness of how prayer is learned, is an area of research which has received little academic attention in Australia. Prayer may be identified as part of the concept of spirituality, and literature on spirituality was reviewed to show this connection. Within Australia, research literature on spirituality was identified in the work of Mackay (1999), Crawford (1996), Engebretson (2001), Duffy (2002) and the Victorian Human Services (1999). Prayer was not the specific focus in any of these research projects and, in general, the participants in these previous studies were adolescents.

International research, similarly, has shown limited attention to children as subjects for research when investigating prayer. Elkind, Spilka and Long (1968) conducted research into the developmental changes that occur in children's understanding of prayer. A review of the research by Coles (1986), Heller (1986) and Hay (1998) was shown to have a relationship to the research project, for instance, some use of prayer by children was noted by these researchers, but in each case, spirituality and not prayer was the primary focus for their study. These various research projects contributed to the design and method of this research and provided a recognised academic framework for analysis and discussion.

Other selected literature which was reviewed came from the broad areas of children's spirituality, religious psychology, religious education and education for resilience. The definition of spirituality and the consideration of spiritual development in children were addressed through the literature. The image of spirituality as an inner human resource was considered in the work of many authors such as Coles (1986), Hart (2002) and Hay (1998). This was related to the need for

adult responsibility to nurture children's spirituality expressed by such authors as Hawkins (1996) and Berryman (1991). The link between spirituality and religion was also examined, as this had a connection to the subject of prayer (McIntosh, 1998). Prayer was considered to reside in the definition of spirituality as 'relational consciousness' (Hay & Nye, 1998, p. 113); a part of the relationship between a human and God.

The theological and psychological understanding of prayer was considered through a review of selected literature by Ulanov (1982), Brueggemann (1986a; 1986b) and Godin (1968). This was particularly related to the aim of this research which was to understand the function of prayer for children. Prayer was also reviewed from literature suggested in the documents from the different school involved in this study. Ideas of prayer from the Jewish (Twerski, 2001) and Muslim (Raji al Faruqi, 1992) traditions were considered as well as ideas about prayer from the Christian tradition (Rahner, 1958). Differences and similarities in relation to prayer were identified from the literature giving the researcher a context in which to understand and respect the views of participants coming from different religious traditions.

As it was anticipated that the participants in this study would receive different forms of religious education, literature in this area was also reviewed. Consideration was given to aspects of theory, curriculum planning and pedagogy in religious education. Literature was reviewed largely in relation to Christian religious education, but many aspects of the discussion were considered to apply to other faith traditions.

The literature raised awareness of the possibility that some school might find tension between the aims of faith-development and open educational investigation (O'Brien, 1999; Moran, 1989; Rossiter, 2004). Theories relating to psychological influences in religious education were also discussed in relation to curriculum and pedagogy which in turn could influence the perception of prayer held by the participants (Berryman, 1991, 1999; Nye, 1996). Although a comprehensive review of literature on religious education was not intended, some context was provided through the review for understanding the views of the participants and the interpretation of findings.

Finally, literature concerned with understanding the contemporary situation of secularisation in Australia, provided a further context for the research (Bouma, 2002; Tarnas, 1996; Fenn, 2001). The information from the Australian census indicated that a considerable proportion of the population was not affiliated with any religious tradition. Therefore, in designing the interview protocol the possibility was noted that some children might not value prayer. Other literature suggested that secularisation might be associated with the development of new forms of spirituality, religious dialogue and forms of prayer (McIntosh, 1998; O'Murchu, 2002; Spong, 2001; Tacey, 2000). This literature provided an attitude of awareness and respect for contemporary culture needed by the researcher to aid the data collection. A consideration of the secularisation of the society was also necessary in relation to the discussion of findings from the data.

The literature concerned with resilience as part of the well-being of children (Whithers, 2001; Victorian Human Services, 1999; Frydenberg, 1999; Pargament, 1997) added further understanding in which the findings of the research could be interpreted.

Findings in Relation to the Question of how Prayer is Learned

By School Group

The data relating to how prayer was learned are grouped according to school groups but this does not indicate a causal relationship. The formal school curriculum in religious education and the school worship activities were considered to have some influence on the participants, but many other aspects of the environment were acknowledged as affecting perceptions about prayer. The data showed that different participants related to school instruction in different ways. Family beliefs and differences in other aspects of socio-cultural background were recognised as contributing to learning about prayer and the experiences of prayer. It may be assumed that when selecting a school for their children, a significant number of parents would choose a school that they consider would support their beliefs, although this may not be the case for all parents. For example, the government school system is officially secular in that no religious teaching is offered as part of the formal curriculum by the departmental teachers; however, some families with strong faith orientations might send their children to a government school. Similarly, independent schools provide some formal religious activities in the Christian tradition, but as can be identified in the data, many of the students who attended an independent school come from families having minimal association with a Christian faith community. With this cautionary note, investigation of how participants perceived learning in prayer will proceed.

The curriculum time given to religious studies is important when recognising the different emphases of the different schools. Table 1 below outlines the differences. The time is shown as an approximate percentage of the total school time. It should

Table 1. Formal teaching time allocated to religious education by school group

	Catholic	Christian	Government	Independent	Jewish	Muslim
Formal class lessons	8%	8%	1% non-compulsory	–	33% Jewish Studies	33% Islamic Studies
Assemblies with prayer	6%	–	–	1%	0.5%	4%
Worship activities	2%	5%	–	0.5%	7%	6%

be noted that Jewish Studies and Islamic Studies comprise teaching in language and history as well as religious studies. These large blocks of curriculum time encompassed religious education as part of learning language and history.

The data from the interviews showed that participants from different schools perceived that prayer was learnt from different sources:

From Catholic schools they were:

- an agreement between Church, school and home
- an experience with the mother
- the life of Jesus
- an inner source.

From Christian schools they were:

- a personal relationship to God through Jesus (an inner knowing)
- an agreement between Church, school and home
- following an example in communal prayer
- experience with family and relatives.

From Government schools:

- an example in communal prayer when going to Church
- the mass media
- following inner knowledge—initiated by feelings
- school (non- compulsory) Christian Religious Education classes.

From the Independent school they were:

- going to Church or school Chapel
- inner knowledge—initiated by need or feelings
- mass media and personal research from books

From the Jewish school:

- the Siddur (prayer book)
- an agreement between Synagogue, school and home
- following an example in communal prayer.

From the Muslim school they were:

- an agreement between Mosque school and home
- study of the Q'ran and the Arabic language
- experiences with parents and teachers
- an inner source.

Combined Findings

Table 2 gives a comparative overview of the data in reference to the perception of how people learn to pray. The numbers in the table refer to the number of participants who expressed a perception that prayer was learned from that source. In the final category ‘Other’ the word in brackets refers to the most common source of knowledge mentioned.

Table 2 shows that participants perceived that learning to pray takes place in various ways. These can be summarised as: through the faith environment of home school and worship centre, through an inner knowledge and through the mass media.

The study then showed two aspects of education in prayer through the data. First it demonstrated the cognitive form of understanding about prayer. Prayer was identified as a human activity of communication with the divine, taking various forms and related to different aspects of human life. These understandings about prayer were shown to correlate largely with the teachings of faith communities, and this teaching had most often taken place in the family, school and worship centre. Secondly there was an experiential knowledge of prayer. Prayer was understood from the inside perspective of the participant’s experience. This aspect of prayer in many cases was shown to be learned through the faith community of family, school and worship centre. However, there was evidence of additional sources of learning in the experiential form of prayer.

The two aspects of learning about prayer and learning to pray were closely connected. Participants were asked ‘How do people learn to pray’? Many responded with, ‘I learned to pray in kindergarten’ or ‘My Mum taught me’. Therefore the responses from the participants were mixed. There was difficulty in identifying the difference between concepts of knowledge about prayer and the prayer experience of the participant. Although it is recognised that a complete separation is not possible, the concept of separation is presumed within much of the theory about liberal contemporary religious education, sometimes called ‘phenomenological’ religious education (Moran, 1989). As aspects of education are considered, a distinction is needed in teaching about prayer and experience where children are encouraged in the practice of prayer.

Table 2. Comparison by school group - How do people learn to pray?

School	Catholic	Christian	Government	Independent	Jewish	Muslim
School	9	2	3	6	8	8
Church	8	5	8	6		
Mosque			1			5
Synagogue			1		7	
At home	1	2	4	4	3	3
Person	8	7	4	3	4	10
Media	1		5	5		
Other	4 (inner)	9 (Jesus)	7 (inner)	7 (inner)	10 (Sidur)	9 (Q’ran)

The Findings Indicating Problems Associated with Some Faith-Centred Learning About Prayer

A number of authors have referred to the complexity involved in learning to pray (Godin, 1968; Soares-Prabhu, 1990; Tabbarah, 1988; Twerski, 2001). They noted that language, comprehension skills and critical thinking are needed for education about prayer. Moore (1982) considered religions, as complex systems, required sophisticated skills to analyse, understand and interpret. Alexander (1998) noted that critical thinking is at the heart of education and education in religion is no exception. O'Brien (1999) considered that postmodern religious education was governed by practical theology or pastoral theology, a complex conversation between the faith tradition and the wider society. Living in the contemporary Australian multifaith culture it is necessary to nurture this dialogue between the particular faith of the worshipping community and the wider society (Delors, 1996; Smith and Carson, 1998). These authors suggested that a liberal educational view point should be followed as a way toward peace and stability. Murdock (1996) stated that the world is now post-colonial and in a state of searching for unity, and in that context, religious education should emphasise the searching dimension of faith and reduce the 'confessional apologetics' (p. 11). That means that faith communities who establish schools have a responsibility to the student to teach about other faith systems as part of a general education in preparation for living in a multifaith environment. However, this study indicated that this responsibility to teach about other faith traditions is not followed in many schools. It appears that teaching about the school faith tradition is often held as exclusive, with little regards for education which appreciates other faith traditions in the wider society.

Findings Related to the Problems Associated with Faith-Centred Learning to Pray

Experience in prayer or the practice of prayer is the second aspect of learning shown through the study. This could be related to the literature on faith development by Fowler (1974) where children were identified as moving through stages showing dependence on the community of faith in the earliest stages. From Fowler's perspective, the school, family and worship community can assist in nurturing the primary stages of faith in the child. The findings of this study showed that many school communities do expose participants to, and involve participants in, the act of prayer. The possibility of positive links for the child with prayer can be given through prayer modeled at school assembly, prayer seen in adult worship or prayer with parents in the home.

Many different examples were seen in the data showing the involvement of participants in prayer through their faith community. However, the experience of prayer for the participants was often linked to academic teaching regarding what is acceptable prayer and what is unacceptable prayer in the different schools. In some of the schools, participants had a view of prayer restricted to the faith community associated with the school. Some authors have suggested that these matters are of

concern in a multifaith, multicultural society with an aim of mutual understanding and respect (Astley and Francis, 1996). The literature suggested that the experience of prayer within a faith community needs to be held in tension with the concern for social cohesion and respect for others in the wider community. It is suggested, here, that dialogue is needed to address this issue within faith traditions and between faith traditions.

Findings Indicating that Children's Spiritual Experiences are Unequally Valued

Hart (2003) proposed that all children have spiritual ability and sensitivity and it is the adult society that often acts to repress and denigrate the spiritual. One example given by Hart, is the incidence of children who have an 'imaginary friend', one who helps them and keeps them company. It is the adult community who expect children to leave these imaginary ideas behind and move into 'reality'. It was observed in the data that many faith traditions have rules and structures that determine which aspects of spirituality are deemed acceptable, and children are expected to learn these rules and expectations. However, the data from participants in the Christian school tradition (a relatively new group of independent schools which are low fee-paying, parent controlled and usually attached to a Pentecostal or Charismatic Church) showed one contemporary community where the mystical 'seeing' is valued by people of all ages. One participant reported an experience when he and his sister saw the 'heavens come' and an angel appear in their back yard. It seems that the faith community had acknowledged this experience as legitimate, and it had become a valuable part of his learning how to pray. Other aspects of prayer in this particular Christian school community also showed an awareness of the spiritual as part of everyday life. Four participants spoke of miracles of healing in their family and others related miraculous answers to their own prayers. From the example of the participants in this school it can be seen that some faith traditions allow more personal freedom in spiritual learning and experience for children.

Findings Indicating that 'Inner Knowledge' was Perceived to be a Resource when Learning to Pray

Many participants expressed the idea that prayer came from within. They offered the opinion that prayer was part of being human and did not need to be learned in a formal sense. The discussion of this perception of 'inner knowledge' of prayer can take many forms.

'Inner Knowledge' could be a Psychological Error

It could be argued that the understanding of learning from an 'inner' source is a questionable position, as most of these participants had a broadly Christian understanding of prayer seen in forgiveness and acceptability to God. For example, one participant recognised God as someone she could trust with any secret. Another

saw God as someone you could tell if you had done something wrong. Yet another thought of God as someone who would understand if you were really sad. In the words of Moore (1982) 'Christianity is a semi-autonomous institution in the west' (p. 19). Christianity has been so much a foundation for general thinking that it has become invisible as a faith tradition. This is similar to the idea that a fish is unaware of the water in which it lives. A number of participants noted they were not religious yet they held religious beliefs about God being there, caring, being interested in them and forgiving them, in other words broadly Christian ideas about God.

'Inner Knowledge' could be Part of Innate Spirituality

On the other hand the perception of an 'inner knowledge' of prayer was similar to the ideas of many authors writing about the spirituality of children. Hay & Nye (1998), Nye (1996), Coles (1990), Hart (2003) and Robinson (1977) all presented the belief that spirituality, the sense of connectedness with the transcendent, is an innate human characteristic. A sense of connection with the divine is part of spirituality and a reaching out to the divine in prayer is viewed as 'natural'. It could also be linked to the theological understanding of the faith traditions represented in this study, that show an understanding that humans were made 'in the image of God' (Genesis 1:27) and were originally in a close relationship with God (Genesis 3:9).

'Inner Knowledge' could be Related to the Growth of Secularisation

The 'inner knowledge' of prayer might be related to the theory of Fenn (2001) who considered that as a society becomes more secular it also becomes more open to ideas of the sacred. Similarly Hervieu-Leger (2000) says 'Modern society may well corrode their traditional base (the base of religion)...however, the same societies open up spaces or sectors that only religion can fill...Utopian spaces' (Hervieu-Leger, 2000, p. ix). That is, the desire for a sense of identity and future found in a relationship with the divine is recognised even more strongly when the influence of faith traditions diminish. Tarnas (1991) expressed the postmodern position as enabling more freedom to speak of God and experience the numinous. Tacey (2000) supports this view through an examination of contemporary Australian society. Therefore spiritual understanding linked to an awareness of God, and a relationship to God, could be considered as part of the secular movement.

'Inner Knowledge' could be a Psychological Reality

The sense of an 'inner knowledge' of prayer to God by children links with Object Relations theory (Rizzuto, 1979; St. Clair, 1994; Ulanov, 1986). The psychological understanding from these authors stated that an image of God is within all people as a central part of life. The relationship with an image of God is seen through this theory to move from an image of primary attachment with a care-giver into more and more complex images of God which both support the person in life situations and challenge the individual to move into the uncertain future. These images could

be seen to correspond to the perceptions of prayer in the data from the participants, where prayer to God both comforts and challenges. In many examples, reaching out to this God in prayer was considered not to be taught, but to come somehow from 'within'. The psychological understanding of prayer by Ulanov (1982) and Godin (1968) combine the idea of Object Relations Psychology with theological understanding. Their work provides a comprehensive frame of reference in which the concept of 'inner knowledge' of prayer could be considered a human psychic reality.

Therefore the 'inner knowledge' of learning to pray could be understood from many perspectives. The large number of references from the participants in this study who considered that prayer did come from an inner source of knowing could be related to the ideas of Coupland (1995), who spoke of the difficulties, dilemmas and needs of contemporary youth. He concluded:

My secret is that I need God- that I am sick and can no longer make it alone.
I need God to help me give, because I no longer seem to be capable of giving;
to help me be kind, as I no longer seem capable of kindness; to help me love,
as I seem beyond being able to love (p. 289).

As the society becomes more diverse and secular, with less agreement in relation to worship of God, it is possible that the sacred becomes more of an inner personal reality. The sense of 'inner knowledge' about prayer, and the idea of prayer being a natural kind of instinct is an area for further research.

Findings Indicating that the Mass Media is a Resource when Learning About Prayer

The role of the media as a source of learning about prayer was identified in environments where participants did not report living in a community where prayer was readily experienced. This links with the theory proposed by Fenn (2001) that in the secular culture, the image of God is shown to exist in new forms. The secular culture of mass media provides a wide selection of cultural possibilities and one of these is the position of having faith in God expressed in prayer. O' Brien (1999) proposed that the postmodern vision of society is a 'collage', as distinct from the older view of society as a 'melting pot' (p. 317). In the past the immigration system was viewed as a 'melting pot' where new groups assimilated into a single cohesive Australian society. However, contemporary multicultural Australian life allows the retention of distinctions between groups, hence the term 'collage'.

The mass media reflects this shift to this image of 'collage' through the varied images of spiritual life often portrayed in documentaries and some popular 'soap operas' displaying different cultural situations. The participants in this study identified images of prayer from the media, and some of these were seen to reflect a Christian view of prayer. For example the films *The Sound of Music* and *Sister Act* were mentioned as sources from which prayer could be learned, and these could be recognised as traditional forms of Christian thinking. However, the TV show

The Simpsons falls into a different genre. *The Simpsons* is a cartoon series from the United States depicting a family involved in various ethical dilemmas. The humorous approach shows critical appraisal of many traditional viewpoints, often highlighting the ambiguity of situations and taking an antiauthoritarian stance. Finding an image of prayer within this cartoon series is part of what O'Brien (1999) identifies as the postmodern culture where the new and the old traditions are seen to be in 'conversation' (p. 316). This links to Kegan's (1994) identification of the state of most young adult thinking in contemporary Western society as 'fourth order consciousness' (p. 345). Fourth order consciousness, according to Kegan, involves self-directed learning with an emphasis on critical analysis and an acceptance of diversity, rather than an acceptance of the more simple traditional respect for power and status. Some children's television programs show the images of the 'fourth order of consciousness' portrayed in Kegan's work, such as *The Simpsons* and *South Park*.

As well as the traditional Christian understanding, other forms of spirituality are found in the contemporary mass media like images of witchcraft and wizardry. The successes of the books and films in the *Harry Potter*¹ series are examples of this. The images of the 'collage' of O'Brien (1999) or the 'spiritual supermarket' of Crawford (1996) become apt descriptors of contemporary secular learning about religion and prayer, as choice and possibilities abound.

Another area of the mass media noted by participants as a source of learning about prayer, were news broadcasts particularly those in times of national disaster. The images of people praying after the terrorist attack on New York (2001) or the bombing in Bali that killed many Australian tourists (2002) were identified as influential in learning how to pray. These carried high levels of emotion for the participants who could identify with the fear and confusion of the situation portrayed.

Documentary programs on television were also mentioned by some participants. In these programs, participants were exposed to prayer forms and rituals that were outside of their immediate environment. Participants who experienced little contact with a faith tradition saw and evaluated various images of prayer for themselves. Half of the participants, who did not consider that they belonged to a faith community, indicated that the mass media was a source of learning about prayer. On the other hand, where participants did belong to a faith community through their family, school or worship centre the identification of the mass media as a source of learning was minimal.

The findings from this study raise pertinent issues for professionals in religious education and education generally in relation to how prayer is learned. In summary the findings show that particular faith communities teach about prayer, personal experience can initiate prayer and the mass media presents examples of prayer as part of life. These different means of learning can be in conflict. Curriculum issues

¹ A popular series of books by J.K. Rowling published by Bloomsbury in the United Kingdom

relate to the difficulty in deciding between how to present knowledge about prayer and the possible experiences of prayer. For example, prayer could be presented as a meditative exercise to calm the mind, or it could be presented as a method of discernment in decision-making or conflict resolution. Further, the development of praise and thanksgiving could be seen as part of education for optimism and resilience. There are also issues related to the presentation and experience of prayer from different faith traditions involving sensitivity and mutual respect. Finally, in the public sector of education, the issue of educating the whole child with the aim of developing spirituality, as in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (2004) and Delors (1996), relates to the teaching of prayer.

Recommendations for Professionals Who are Concerned with Student Welfare and Religious Education

Recommendation One—that Prayer is Taught and Practised in Religious Education

In curriculum development, prayer should be included, both as a subject of academic study and as an experiential component. The participants viewed prayer as part of religion, and linked it to the image of God who was connected to the good. The experiences of prayer indicated in the data, displayed a connection between the world of the child and religious beliefs. Prayer is therefore considered to be an aspect of the religious education program where academic study can have personal relevance for the student.

It is also possible that some understanding of the psychological function of prayer should be included in curriculum design. Understanding about prayer could include teaching about coping and how prayer could assist in meaning-making. To pray means that the difficult situation is viewed in a larger context, a personal experience is placed in a world situation associated with a loving creator God. Prayer can mean quietness, where a reflective space is created and time is given for the situation to be viewed from different perspectives (Berryman, 1999). Prayer can also mean a sense of identity and social comfort of shared belief, celebration and ritual. Another option is an exploration of the use of intercessory prayer as related to the sense of social connection and mutual support that are considered part of the ability to cope with difficult life experiences.

Recommendation Two—that Prayer is Taught with a Multifaith Awareness

This recommendation comes from a combination of the findings of the research and the literature reviewed. The data disclosed that participants coming from some schools did not value or respect the practice of prayer from other faith traditions. As a matter for broad educational policy, when living in a multifaith society and world, it is recommended that a knowledge of prayer from a variety of traditions should be part of religious education (Coleman, 1999; Delors, 1996; Moran, 1989).

The multifaith awareness can also be considered part of the development of mature faith, where personal belief is only fully valued when there is awareness of other faith and truth options (Moran, 1989).

Recommendation Three—that Pedagogy Reflect an Awareness of Children’s Spirituality

The data in this study have shown that prayer is an important part of children’s spirituality. Participants have shown a sense of relationship with God as well as social relationships, relationships with the environment and an awareness of their own inner life of emotions and needs. If teachers of religion are to understand that prayer is central for children, then some consideration should be given to the view that spirituality is somewhat innate and some aspects of prayer can be a natural ability for children. This has the potential to result in a style of teaching in the classroom, which will nurture spirituality. Religious education can be presented in such a way as to emphasise the personal sense of an ongoing quest. This leads to respect for the inner capacity of the child.

Recommendation Four—that Prayer be Related to Ritual and Symbol

Prayer was understood by the participants to be directed towards God: the unseen, the mystery, the source of goodness or the Knowing One. Difficulty was expressed by some participants as to the best way to address God. They said that a sign was needed like kneeling or bowing to show God that they were praying. Most participants used the ritual movements and gestures of their familiar faith community saying that this helped them to communicate. Similarly the use of symbols of the cross or holy objects were valued by some participants. Although prayer was explained by some participants as a simple thing to do like talking or thinking, all participants used some form of symbol or ritual when praying. This is an area where appreciation of different rituals and symbols from other faith traditions could facilitate both interfaith knowledge as well as giving other symbolic options for children to use in prayer. It was demonstrated by the data that children with little background in prayers of a faith traditions, collected symbols and aspects of ritual from different sources and used them to help express their prayers.

Conclusion

Although the research project had limitations, the data revealed perceptions of prayer held by children that can contribute to better education in spirituality. The meaning of prayer as a connection with God who was good, was expressed by all of the participants. All of the participants had prayed and all told stories of when prayer was important and relevant in their lives, prayer was shown as part of their personal, spiritual experience. For about two thirds of the participants, communal prayer in the faith community was also a valued part of their spiritual experience.

The function of prayer was shown through the data as a personal way to perceive and respond to the experiences of life. Prayer, both private and collective, was seen as a way to find help in the challenging emotional states of anxiety, loneliness, fear, anger and guilt. Prayer was shown in this research as a form of coping. Prayer was also associated with feelings of thanksgiving, praise and hope by about half of the participants.

The findings in relation to the function of prayer raise some important issues in contemporary Australian society. If we are living in an age where the religious traditions are in decline, as stated by Fenn (2001) and Hervieu-Leger (2000), it seems probable that the use of prayer might decline, at least in terms of public respect or acceptability. However, the data from this research suggests that for the participants, prayer continues to be held in high regard and considered a useful part of life. Secondly if, as is proposed by Kegan (1982) and Deveson (2003), contemporary society sometimes places children in situations of extreme stress, then protective factors and coping mechanisms should be encouraged. Prayer, as shown from this study, is used by children as a form of coping. This presents the multicultural and multifaith society with a dilemma. Prayer in most cases is associated with religious traditions, but religious traditions form only some of the many philosophical positions valued in the Australian society. If prayer is recognised and encouraged as a positive psychological tool for wellbeing in children, it is likely that this recognition will be associated with a positive regard for faith traditions. By promoting and valuing prayer it is possible that the present secularist orientation of society will be diminished. The preservation of freedom of choice not associated with any form of religion is an Australian postmodern value that could be threatened by an emphasis on the value of prayer for children.

Therefore, as we consider education in prayer, many variables are held in tension. There are issues of faith-promotion from the viewpoint of a religious tradition, with the integrity of presenting other faith options; there is academic knowledge, with nurture of personal experiences in prayer; and there is respect for religious tradition, with openness to personal spiritual quest. Education as a dynamic relationship of enquiry, steers a delicate path between these variables.

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THE ROLE OF LITERATURE IN CHILDREN'S SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Ann M. Trousdale

Louisiana State University

Introduction

Great spiritual teachers down through the ages have understood the power of narrative, but appreciation of the role that narrative may play in the development of children's imagination, and of the role that imagination may play in children's spiritual development has been longer in coming. This chapter describes the potential for using works of literature to support children's spiritual growth. It provides perspectives on the history and nature of narrative and the history of children's literature as it relates to spiritual and religious matters. It outlines recent research in the nature of children's spirituality and the relation between spirituality and religion. It concludes with a description of theories regarding reader response to literature and of appropriate pedagogical approaches.

The Beginnings

'In the beginning, God created....'

'In the beginning, all was darkness. Then....'

From the earliest days, the human impulse toward understanding has been expressed through story. Noted storyteller Ruth Sawyer (1962) traces the beginnings of story back to prehistoric times when our ancestors lived in trees or caves, hunting daily for food, their own survival from day to day a precarious matter. According to Sawyer, the first conscious storytelling likely began with these early hunters, in impromptu chants exulting in some act of bravery or accomplishment. Gradually, these chants developed into prose narratives, and, as the focus on one's own accomplishments broadened to include family and tribe, the third-person narrative came into being.

As our ancestors banded together in tribes, as they built habitations affording them greater safety, and as they began to allocate duties and responsibilities among themselves, they began to experience moments of leisure, eventually leisure to sit back, look around, and wonder: this place we live in, the water, the trees, the sky: where did they come from? Why does the world get dark, and then get light? Why the long periods of cold and then long periods of warmth?

Their initial quest for understanding did not manifest itself through scientific hypotheses or mathematical measurements; it manifested itself through story. The earth? It must have been created by some powerful being at the beginning of time. The sun? For the early Greeks it was a god in his chariot, traversing the sky. For the early Cherokee, Grandmother Spider made her way into heaven and stole the sun to bring light to earth's darkness.

Deeds of great human exploits were also told and retold, the heroes and their actions often taking on larger-than-life dimensions. As time went on, stories were created to teach some truth about life, to illustrate a moral principle, or merely to entertain. And the stories were passed down, giving the people a sense of communal and personal identity, an understanding of commonly held values, of how one was to relate to others and to the natural world, an understanding of the Divine. Today we know these old stories, born in the oral tradition, as myths, legends, fables, folktales. They were originally intended for adult audiences, but in recent centuries they have increasingly been thought of as stories appropriate for children.

Why Story?

What have great spiritual teachers sensed, or known, about story? Why, when Jesus wanted to describe the Kingdom of God, did he tell a story? Why did Buddha, when he wanted to teach a spiritual or ethical concept, tell a story? Why have the stories of the Hebrew patriarchs and matriarchs persisted over thousands of years, still providing a basis for Jewish identity?

In recent years a number of scholars have attempted to explain the nature and appeal of story. According to Jerome Bruner (1986), the human brain is pre-wired for story. Narrative, says Bruner, is one of two primary modes of human thought, two 'distinctive ways of ordering experience, of constructing reality' (p. 11). The paradigmatic mode describes and explains phenomena according to categories which are related to one another to form a system. This mode of thought, which Bruner also calls the logico-scientific mode, deals in general causes and is concerned with verifiable empirical truth. This is the mode of human thought that has been privileged in the modern age. The second mode of thought—generally discredited or marginalised in the modern age—is the narrative. The narrative mode seeks not to establish formal and empirical truths but rather verisimilitude, life-likeness. Bruner says that 'narrative is built upon concern for the human condition,' in contrast to the 'heartlessness' of logical thought (p. 14).

Bakhtin (1981) has also provided a useful way of understanding various kinds of discourse. He describes as 'authoritative' discourse the type of discourse that

strives to determine behavior or 'ideological interrelations with the world' (p. 342). Authoritative discourse is characterised by distance from oneself, a lack of dialogic possibilities, a lack of play, of 'spontaneously creative stylising variants'; it is static, with its own single calcified meaning (pp. 342–3). A second type of discourse is one which Bakhtin describes as having interior persuasiveness. This type of discourse does not necessarily appeal to any external authority but is flexible, with malleable borders. It is contextualised and can be related to one's own life. This type of discourse offers further creative interaction; it is open, unfinished, capable of further representation. Harold Rosen (1986) describes narrative discourse as having this interior persuasiveness; it works in us on a level which authoritative discourse, discourse that seeks to tell us what or how to think, does not attain.

One cannot draw a one-to-one parallel between Bakhtin's and Bruner's categories; Bakhtin does not identify internally persuasive discourse with narrative discourse only, and he includes many types of discourse beyond the logico-scientific mode in his understanding of authoritative discourse. He does, however, assert that the role of authoritative discourse in fictional, narrative writing is 'insignificant' and the artistic rendering of authoritative discourse is 'impossible' (p. 344).

Historical Trends in Books for Children

Early reading materials developed explicitly for children would be classified as authoritative discourse; they were essentially instructional in nature. As early as the seventh century in Europe, monks copied out and illustrated lesson books and picture Bibles for students in monastery schools or for children of the wealthy classes, providing instruction in such matters as religion, children's duties, or the natural world.

The invention of the printing press in the mid-15th century allowed widespread publication of heretofore limited reading materials, and literacy spread to the middle and lower classes of society. Children learned to read from hornbooks, small wooden paddles typically printed with the alphabet, a syllabary, and the Lord's Prayer. A thin sheet of transparent horn covered the printed text. Students graduated to primers, developed from devotional books of hours containing prayers to be said at certain times of day; an alphabet was simply added for children.

The rise of Puritanism in Europe and the American colonies had an enormous impact on children's reading materials in the 17th and 18th centuries. Believing that it was only through reading the Bible that one could escape the wiles of the Devil and understand the way one was to live in order to be saved, the Puritans placed strong emphasis on literacy for children—girls as well as boys. Children in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in America received early reading instruction from *The New England Primer*, published in 1683. The alphabet was taught through such verses as 'In Adam's fall/We sinned all.' Widely used in America and England for well over a century, *The New England Primer* also contained a catechism, the Ten Commandments, pictures of Christian martyrs, and verses about death.

As adult reading tastes became more sophisticated, the old myths, legends, folktales, and fables gradually made their way into the literary domain of children—‘relegated to the nursery,’ as Tolkien (1965) has said, ‘as shabby or old-fashioned furniture is relegated to the play-room’ (p. 34). The first of the types of traditional literature to be used as children’s reading matter in Western European countries was the fable, the most overtly didactic of all the types of old tales. Aesop’s *Fables*, first written down around 300 B.C.E., were endorsed in the late 17th century by British philosopher John Locke as appropriate educational materials for children. In the same century the French writer La Fontaine put the fables into rhymed verse, and memorisation of ‘La Fontaine’s Fables’ became a staple of French education. Rousseau, however, cautioned against using the fables to teach children the explicit moral lessons adults found in the tales, pointing out that children are likely to draw quite different meanings from the stories than do adults. My own research with children’s responses to fairy tales supports this view (Trousdale, 1987; 1989; 2002).

In 19th century Germany, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published their *Kinder und Hausmärchen* originally for an audience of adult linguists. The book rapidly became popular with children. It was thought that the fright evoked by the gruesome and violent elements in many of the tales would be useful for disciplinary purposes (Degh, 1965).

A new perspective on writing for children appeared in England in 1744 with the publication of John Newbery’s *A Little Pretty Pocket Book* which, its title page reveals, was intended for both the instruction and the amusement of children—a novel concept at the time, but one that was eventually to take root and flourish. Religious and moral overtones continued to characterise most 19th century works of fiction for children, such as *The Adventures of Pinocchio* by Italian author Carlo Collodi and *Heidi* by Swiss author Johanna Spyri. In that same century, however, two children’s books free of didactic message, intended purely to amuse, were published in England: Edward Lear’s *Book of Nonsense* and Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Gradually overt didacticism gave way to implicit moral or religious values: families engaging in daily prayer, church going, emphasis on ethical duty. Yet well into the 20th century there persisted an assumption that one of the goals of literature is to teach moral or religious lessons to children.

Implicit in such an approach to teaching and learning is the premise that the text determines the meaning the reader will make of the literary work. In this theoretical orientation, a child’s mind is thought of as a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, upon which information is to be inscribed. In the religious world, this orientation assumes that spirituality is to be taught to children, usually through teaching the religious tenets of a particular faith tradition. These theoretical orientations have dominated the world of secular and religious education until the present day, but recent research and theory in both children’s spirituality and readers’ encounters with literary texts are challenging those assumptions.

The mid- and late 20th century saw an increasing secularisation of the children’s book world, reflecting perhaps a more secular society. Today,

the vast majority of children's literature published by the large publishing houses tends to be free of didactic tone or intent, though there are religious publishing houses that continue to publish explicitly religious books for children. Books for children which deal with spiritual and religious matters are being published by the secular publishers, but here the tendency seems to be to raise questions rather than impose answers. In such books, children's spiritual wonderings or insights tend to be taken seriously, and, often, organised religion is critiqued or is presented as limited in some way. Spirituality is not always related to religious influence.

Spirituality and Religion

The relation of spirituality and religion has become a matter of considerable research and theorising in recent years. Late 20th and early 21st century research with children, notably that of Hay and Nye (1998), Hart (2003), and Schoonmaker et al. (2005) suggests strongly that children possess an innate spiritual capacity. Nye's research leads her to an understanding of children's spirituality as 'relational consciousness,' manifested in two patterns, '[A]n unusual level of *consciousness* or perceptiveness relative to other passages of conversation spoken by the child' and '[C]onversation expressed in a context of how the child *related* to things, other people, him/herself, and God' (p. 113).

Hart's research rather broadens our understanding. Hart observed roughly five aspects or themes manifested in children's spirituality:

- 'Listening for Wisdom,' a tuning in to the inner voice; a capacity for direct knowing, for going to the essential heart of an issue, a capacity for guidance from the Divine or from those who have died, an understanding of the centrality of love;
- 'Wonder,' including intuitive experience, mystical moments, experiences of oneness with the universe;
- 'Between You and Me,' a relational sense, often manifesting in compassion or empathy with others;
- 'Wondering,' or asking the big questions of life; and
- 'Seeing the Invisible,' often manifested through multidimensional sensibility, seeing waves of light or color or energy, or sensing the presence of angelic beings.

Schoonmaker et al.'s research (2005) indicates an awareness of the Divine as an aspect of children's spirituality.

The relation between spirituality and religion has been variously defined. Hart provides a succinct definition: 'Religion is a systematised approach to spiritual growth formed around doctrines and standards of behavior.' As Hart says, the spiritual is the 'original seed of religion' (p. 8).

Reader Response to Literature

The view that a child is not a *tabula rasa* on either the cognitive or the spiritual level, but rather an active maker of meaning, a questioner, a seeker of understanding, is compatible with a body of literary theory that is collectively described as reader response to literature. Theorists in this relatively new field also challenge the assumption that a literary work has a single definable meaning at which the reader ideally arrives.

Louise Rosenblatt is one such theorist. According to Rosenblatt (1978), the meaning of a literary work does not reside on the printed page at all, but comes into being in the transaction that occurs between the reader and the text. What the reader brings to the text—one's life experiences, one's present preoccupations or inner needs, the purpose for reading, the setting in which the reading event occurs—affect the meaning the reader will make of the text. For Rosenblatt, the literary work evoked by the reader is unique to that time, place, and reader.

Rosenblatt says that past literary experiences 'serve as subliminal guides' with respect to the genre that is anticipated, to the details that are to be attended to, to the kinds of organising patterns that are to be developed. Each kind of literary work, each genre, makes its own kind of conventional demands upon the reader; subjects, themes, and treatments that are traditional may provide the reader guides to organisation and a background against which something new or original in the text may be recognised. Rosenblatt further makes a distinction between two types, or purposes, in reading: reading to take knowledge away from the text (efferent reading) and reading as a lived-through vicarious experience (aesthetic reading). She notes that in reading literary works, readers are often 'shuttling' between the two poles.

While Rosenblatt acknowledges the significant role of the reader and what the reader brings to the literary encounter in the literary work that is evoked, she is not as subjective as such reader response theorists as David Bleich (1978) and Stanley Fish (1980) who minimise the role the text plays in the literary interpretation. For Rosenblatt not every interpretation can be called a valid one. She posits two constraints upon the validity of the interpretation: the interpretation may not contradict anything in the written text and may not infer something for which there is no verbal basis in the text.

German literary theorist Wolfgang Iser (1978) points out that a writer leaves gaps, or blanks, in a literary text, when information is not made explicit. The reader, filling in those gaps, is drawn into the text by supplying what is meant by what is not said. The text continues to guide, to confirm, or correct the reader's inferences, as the reader continually casts forward toward a future horizon of possibilities, while retaining the 'past horizon that is already filled' (p. 111). Thus, in reading a work of literature, the reader is 'composing' the story in his or her own mind; as Bruner (1986) puts it, 'the story is in effect being *rewritten* by the reader, rewritten so as to allow play for the reader's imagination' (p. 35).

An old Jewish commentary speaks of the Bible stories as having been composed in just such a way, of their having been composed in black and white fire. The

black fire is seen in the form of the printed or handwritten words on the page or scroll; the white fire is found in the spaces between and around the black. The black fire is fixed for all time; the white fire is forever kindled by fresh encounters between changing times and the unchanging words. The black fire establishes the canonised object we can all see before us; the white spaces represent the endless potential for the fresh interpretation of that object (Pitzele, 1998, pp. 23–24).

One can see in the development of the Jewish religious tradition an interplay between such narrative discourse and discourse which Bakhtin would classify as authoritative discourse. The Hebrew Bible is rich in storytelling but is not altogether narrative. The stories are undergirded by--or perhaps undergird--the many laws that prescribed how the Hebrew people are to relate to God, to others, and to the creation. Clearly the laws and regulations found in the Torah have had great authority for the Hebrew people, but had the Bible contained authoritative discourse alone, one may wonder whether the Hebrew people would have related to it in the same way over the years, or whether they would eventually have found it so distant, so rigid, so calcified that it would have become a mere cultural artifact. Would it have lost its appeal to the heart, to the imagination? A very different kind of people might have been shaped by rigid, authoritative discourse alone. Indeed, story has played a powerful role in the ongoing life and power of the Bible, in both Hebrew and Christian Testaments, through its inner persuasiveness. As Roy Heller (2001) puts it: Do we choose not to kill simply because the law says, 'Do not kill?' or because when we hear stories about killing we understand, this is what it means to kill; this is what the consequences of killing are?

Towards a Pedagogy

Bruner (1986) and Bakhtin's (1981) work in narrative, Rosenblatt (1978) and Iser's (1978) work in reader response, and Nye (1998) Hart's (2003) and Schoonmaker et al.'s (2005) research in children's spirituality seem to point toward common implications for the use of literature with children.

Pike (2002) has found that a pedagogy informed by reader response theory encourages students to bring 'the whole person,' including one's spiritual faculties, to bear upon a literary encounter. In a study of adolescents' responses to poetry, Pike (2002) found that, with the influence of reader response theory, the students engaged with the poems on spiritual and moral levels, deriving 'experiences of moral and spiritual significance' from them. In addition, and perhaps as importantly, they 'had their own views challenged and gained new direction' (p. 189). Likewise, seven- and eight-year-old children were able to fill in the gaps in the text of Douglas Wood's *Old Turtle* (1992) with quite mature and astute insights. Further, their perceptions of God were expanded through the reading of the text (Trousedale, 2002).

While both Rosenblatt and Iser balance the reader's response with the influence of the text, there is the possibility that personal, subjective response alone may become one's criterion for and shaper of meaning, of truth. As Parker Palmer (1983) points

out, there is as much danger in this kind of subjectivism as in the objectivism that has dominated Western educational practice in the past. Objectivism, Palmer notes, literally means 'to put against, to oppose.' It assumes a distinction between the knower and the object to be known, placing us in adversarial relationship with the world, with one another, and, ultimately, with ourselves. It seeks 'objective facts, objective theories, objective reality,' claiming that knowledge that is not 'objective' is not knowledge at all, but merely passion or prejudice. Thus mythology, stories, poems, religion and other forms of conviction or devotion have, in many circles, been discounted as valid ways of knowing (p. 23).

Palmer (1983) cites the work of philosophers in many fields who have exposed the claims of objectivity, who have come to understand the inseparability of the observer and the observed, the knower and the known. Subjectivism has been seen as an antidote to objectivism, and yet, Palmer says, '[i]f my private perceptions are the measure of truth, if my truth cannot be challenged or enlarged by the perceptions of another, I have merely found one more way to objectify and hold the other at arm's length, to avoid again the challenge of personal transformation... If private truth (no matter how full and rich) is the measure of all things, I can never be drawn into encounter with realities outside myself—especially those that might chastise and correct me' (p. 55).

The answer, for Palmer (1983), is community and relationship. Indeed, Palmer says, truth is relationship. Even in individual personal encounters with literature, it is relationship that is the key to 'moments of deep knowing.' He speaks of the experience of reading a great novel and 'suddenly becoming aware that it is reading us as well.... The writer has created a living world with words, a vital communion that cannot be taken merely as an object of study but one that draws out our meanings even as we draw its meaning out' (p. 59). Well wrought characters in fiction 'come off the page to converse with the reader; they seem to know us and our secrets at least as well as we know them; they reveal us to ourselves in ways not possible through simple self-analysis... We discover the autonomy of such characters when they tell us things about ourselves we would rather not hear!' (pp. 59–60).

In a later study, Pike (2003) also points to the need for social interaction to supplement and enhance the individual reader's encounters with literary text. Students need such interactions among themselves to achieve a fuller response, Pike notes; and their perspective is further broadened by a teacher who brings to the discussion greater 'knowledge of the social and cultural context of a work and a greater understanding of its style and form' (p. 78). Through such discussion, 'the reading of literature becomes a collaborative venture in the remaking of meaning through personal and shared responses to a text' (Webb, cited in Pike, p. 70).

Young people, however, do not come into the world knowing how to discuss literature in fruitful and mutually-enhancing ways. And the teacher, who perhaps has known only the role of lecturer and arbitrator of meaning, may find it difficult to listen and respond to students in ways that both honor individual response and also lead students into a deeper or fuller appreciation of a given text. I have

discovered two useful models of developing such interactions with children: Godly Play, developed by Jerome Berryman (1991), and Literature Circles, developed by Jerome Harste, Kathy Short, and Carolyn Burke (1988) and further articulated by Harvey Daniels (1994).

In Godly Play, Berryman seeks to draw young children into Bible stories through an oral telling of the story accompanied by the use of tangible, manipulable objects representing figures in the stories. After telling the story, Berryman begins a series of 'wonderings,' asking such questions as, 'I wonder what part of the story is the most important part' or 'I wonder which is your favorite part of the story' or 'I wonder where you are in the story. What part of the story is about you?' (Berryman, 2002). The storyteller listens to each child's response, affirms it, and waits for other responses. Such an approach invites children to enter the story imaginatively, honors children's personal spiritual insights while considering others' responses. It allows them to play with the malleable borders of the story and to relate the story to their own lives. The children are later encouraged to extend their imaginative interplay with the stories through other artistic expression.

In the United States many teachers are finding Literature Circles to be a means of encouraging thoughtful discussion of stories. In Literature Circles, small groups of children gather to discuss a book or portion of a book that they have chosen to read in common. The teacher's role is one of facilitator, turning over more and more responsibility for guiding the discussion to the students.

In Daniels' (1994) model for Literature Circles, the children play a rotating assortment of tasks. One child is the Discussion Director, developing questions for discussion. The Creative Connector draws connections between this reading and other readings or experiences. The Artful Artist illustrates a favorite part of the story. The Literary Luminary selects particularly powerful or expressive passages, while the Word Wizard looks for interesting or new words. The atmosphere is informal and playful but focused. Such discussions require listening to one another and responding to what one hears or sees, thus experiencing the bonds of community. In addition such approaches subtly teach children how to discuss books in a thoughtful and mature way and expand children's interpretive powers beyond their own individual response.

Conclusions

Theory and research in the areas of narrative, reader response to literature, and children's spirituality strongly support the use of children's literature to support children's spiritual development. Children's literature provides an opportunity for children to enter a world not their own, vicariously to identify with the story's characters and their situations, thus stimulating the emotions, the imagination, the cognitive powers, and moral reasoning. Contemporary children's literature about spiritual matters often resonates with children's own spiritual experiences or encourages them to think beyond their own experiences.

Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore (1999) describes a narrative approach as 'relational teaching.' Sharing stories, she points out, 'ground[s] people in their heritage and give[s] expression to their present situation'; it 'binds people together even across ideological divides.' Narrative teaching, she says, 'gives meaning to abstract concepts, presenting them within contexts in which... people can view the parts in relation to the whole,' thereby gaining a greater perspective on the individual parts (p. 131). Such teaching allows the important spiritual questions to be raised, to be articulated, to be discussed, and to be seen in light of others' perspectives.

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APPROACHING THE TEACHING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGH THE CREATIVE ARTS

Dr. Peta Goldberg

Faculty of Education, Australian Catholic University

Introduction

A culture of critical inquiry using the creative arts might be used to revitalise the teaching of religious education. A Critically Engaging Creative Arts (CECA) approach is used here to provide a way of looking forward with possibilities for the future (a prospection) built on what has been helpful from the past. This is a 'constructive' approach in the sense that it lays out possibilities and attempts to draw on what has been done in the past and then moves beyond contemporary notions of religious education.

The Arts and Human Experience

The arts are an integral part of human experience. They enable people not only to express ideas, beliefs and feelings but also to experience the world in ways they have not done before. According to Sawicki (1990), they provide 'an interface of humanity with transcendence' (p. 53) and up until the nineteenth century were created not in order to entertain but in the service of religion or magic (Honour & Fleming, 1999). For Viladesau (2000), the arts not only reveal the locus of a faith tradition and an embodiment of religious practice but also serve as texts of Christian theology (p. 124). They can be seen as important to the history of theology and as a mode of reflection on the ideas and values which constitute theology.

Religions communicate not only through their scripture and theological writings, their institutions, movements and ethical practices but also through their rites, poetry, architecture, music, paintings and sculptures. In a concrete way the arts provide a vivid and accurate sense of religion as it is lived, imagined and felt by its adherents. A study of the arts is basic for any education because the arts record and transmit the history, traditions and values of civilisation (Pinciss, Danzeger,

Basquin, & Dynes, 1985; Fleming, 1980; Viladesau, 2000). The arts are both a fundamental way of communicating values and an expression of the creative imagination.

Linking Christian faith and theology with the arts is not something new. Christians have enjoyed a rich history of using the arts as a way of teaching and of bearing witness to the Christian faith. During the Middle Ages, the arts were specifically employed for their teaching or didactic functions and incorporated into daily Christian practice instead of being isolated as a separate sphere of human activity. Artistic activity was highly valued because it expressed religious ideas through concrete forms like stained glass, stone, chants, hymns, paintings and plays. Cathedrals were the centre of community life where visual and aural images expressed people's understanding of God, good and evil, life and death. The creative arts, religion, and life were intimately related. However, as the arts became less prominent in the religious and secular rituals of the late Middle Ages, they lost their aura and began to accumulate an 'aesthetic discourse and to acquire the status of an institution' (Jusdamis, 1991, p. 90).

From the Enlightenment onwards, religion and the religious world have often been treated with suspicion and viewed by the elite as unnecessary for cultural life. 'The role of the aesthetic has become diminished in the face of a rationalist religion that reduced faith to dogma and truth to proposition' (Stone, 2000, p. 4). In theology, the printed word began to dominate imagination, drama, myth, pictures and storytelling. The separation of the arts from life remains a phenomenon of modernity.

Film can become an important medium for shaping or questioning theology because, like culture, media and technology, it can provoke religious experience and theological reflection. The use of film in religious discussion may enable people to reflect upon theological ideas and religious *praxis* and may even challenge them in the light of the impact of the medium. Hatt (1990) concludes that the theologians' world of abstract concepts and the filmmakers' world of concrete image need not remain isolated and that, when they are engaged, the dialogue can be mutually beneficial. Film can even be used in ways which challenge the received wisdom of religious traditions.

Despite film's legitimacy in the arts and its cultural contribution to society, on the whole it is not regarded with widespread interest by religious educators, theologians and church leaders. Few religious professionals contribute to religious dialogue in the market place of the cinema. Holloway (1977) considers this to be tragic:

cinema is...frequently lauded as the richest avenue of cultural expression available for examining the complex values and problems of the contemporary world. The reluctance for the church's involvement in film appears to lie in the muddled image of the so-called 'religious film' as well as the unwillingness of church to deviate from traditional practices to confront openly the arts...a cinema of pietism is still by and large the only acceptable form (Holloway, 1977, p. 26).

According to Hurley (1975) television films (even the secular variety) 'are a veritable treasure house of case studies for the prescriptive science of ethics, philosophy and theology' (p. 176). Both he and Holloway believe that it is time for the church and those who teach religion to take notice of film as it interprets and reflects today's immediate and ultimate concerns. Because films are able to communicate to the masses, they can, according to Black (1997), take on the role of twentieth-century morality plays.

Background to the Critically Engaging Creative Arts (CECA) Approach

The Critically Engaging Creative Arts approach requires a culture of critical inquiry that is able to display and reflect what Fiorenza (1999) calls the 'rhetoricity of all knowledge' (p. 77). A critical rhetoric of inquiry requires religious educators not only to identify and examine positivist practices but also to acknowledge the theoretical frameworks and socio-political and cultural interests that undergird their approach to teaching religious education. The predominantly discursive practices used by teachers in religious education classrooms need to be examined. Recent advances made in curriculum development through the hermeneutic tradition, critical theory and arts-related investigations have made it possible to construct a new approach to religious education that is creative, engaging, emancipatory and liberating.

Particular attention needs to be paid to 'Critical Framing', a term coined by Cope and Kalantzis (2000), which involves learners in creating a personal and theoretical distance from what they have learned so that they can critically interpret the social and cultural contexts of a text's meaning in relation to its context. As well as drawing on the work of educationists, the proposed Creative Arts approach draws upon and develops ideas proposed by Kreitzer (1993, 1994), Exum (1993;1996), Bal (1987;1999) and Bach (1997, 1999). Initially, Kreitzer (1993, 1994) explored the relatively unmapped territory of the relationship between theology and film. Kreitzer (1993, 1994) believed that the 'hermeneutical flow could be reversed' by studying representations of biblical texts in films and then returning to examine the biblical text with fresh eyes. He saw representations of biblical texts as a form of midrash, an imaginative expansion of the biblical tradition. He believed that, when viewers are able to identify the midrashic character of film, they may be alerted to the presence of midrash within biblical texts themselves. He acknowledged that while many people have no trouble recognising embellishments in modern re-interpretations of biblical texts, few people realise that the biblical text is also embellished. He saw films and other representations as a way of pointing to the multi-layered character of biblical texts.

Kreitzer (1993) began his exploration of film and the Bible by asking what could be added to our understanding of scripture through a close examination of literary heritage (p. 12). In other words, he explored how we might better understand the scriptures by interacting with some of the twentieth century voices which dialogue

with biblical texts. He believed that literary texts might be the very instruments that would help facilitate clarification and redefinition, and provide the means for us to engage anew in the hermeneutical circle (p. 12). While acknowledging that cultural expressions have been important vehicles through which we have accessed biblical materials, he has been struck by the increasing dominance of the visual media as the means through which we gain new information. The growing popularity of film as a teaching tool can be evidenced in many disciplines, particularly in the way many English teachers have used film as a means of entry into the works of Shakespeare and other literary classics. Likewise he saw cinematic interpretations of biblical texts as providing a doorway through which we could enter the hermeneutical area of biblical studies.

Using and adapting Kreitzer's idea of reversing the hermeneutical flow allows students to take their place in the hermeneutical circle and to explore how much of their own ideas and influences they bring to the table when interpreting texts. It also enables students to examine the interface between the world of the Bible and the world/s of the creative arts. It is a cross-disciplinary study that allows participants to pay attention to the creative arts and to recognise their influence upon us. It is only within the last ten to fifteen years that religious educators have drawn attention to the interface between religious education and other disciplines (Jackson, 1990). A cross-disciplinary approach such as the Creative Arts approach is designed to tap into students' interest areas and to reflect and develop current thinking in the area of religious education. Kreitzer's idea was primarily concerned with how films re-presented parts of the biblical text for modern audiences. He did not, however, explore how the 'new texts' may influence interpretations of the 'old texts'. While Kreitzer's idea introduced a way of using films as an insight into biblical texts, there are even more possibilities for teachers who incorporate the work of contemporary feminist biblical scholars into their teaching approach. A combination of these insights forms the core of the Creative Arts approach.

In recent times feminist scholars such as Bal, Exum and Bach have also investigated the role that the arts have played in the re-telling of biblical stories. They, unlike Kreitzer, do not privilege the biblical text or indeed any particular retelling. What they tend to do is question how stories of biblical woman are altered, expanded or invented and how gender ideology of the biblical text is reinscribed and challenged by cultural appropriations. For many of them, the role of the reader is central in determining textual meaning and so there is a 'plurality of interpretive possibilities' (Exum, 1993). Their two-pronged approach, while centring on the role and interpretation of women in the text, is also concerned with the social and cultural assumptions that cluster around sexual difference and the influence these have on representation and interpretation. Feminist readings are not neutral readings. They challenge people with counter-readings of texts.

The Critically Engaging Creative Arts approach combines elements of Kreitzer's reversing the hermeneutical flow with the hermeneutic possibilities presented by feminist scholars and so offers teachers of religious education alternative ways of approaching the curriculum of religious education.

The Critically Engaging Creative Arts approach outlined here attempts to broaden the concept of what is included in the cultural backdrop of religious education. The approach proposed reflects a shift taking place within religious education, a shift which acknowledges the wide variety of ideas and influences that impact upon religious education. Religious education is no longer seen as the messenger boy of theology but rather as a discipline in its own right whose conversation partners are many and varied and include education, sociology, psychology, literature, art, music and film.

The chapter proposes a definite move from faith-forming or catechetical approaches that assume that all members of the class are of the one faith and mindset to an educational model focusing on understanding and learning about religion. The Creative Arts approach proposed has drawn on the use of the arts by the Christian church in instruction and faith development over the centuries. The current proposal incorporates classic and contemporary creative arts into an educational approach to religious education.

Considering a painting or a film as a text is different from appreciating its contribution to art history or to cinematic theory. The Creative Arts approach attempts to explore how culture reads textual and visual images and acknowledges that reading is not neutral. My enthusiasm for using the creative arts in religious education has been confirmed not only because they increase student interest in and engagement with the biblical texts but also because they are seen to be the mode of communication for students of the third millennium.

While the previous section has provided a theoretical justification for the development of the Creative Arts approach to religious education, the following section highlights the literacies one would need to acquire to maximise the approach.

Literacies

The Critically Engaging Creative Arts approach to religious education aims to increase knowledge and develop literacy—visual literacy, religious literacy and multimodal literacy. Teaching and learning within this approach not only take account of the social and cultural contexts of the learners and texts but also aim to develop critical thinking skills. When students are given opportunities to examine a wide range of texts critically in both print and visual media, they develop more complex ability to interact more intentionally with everything they read and see.

Language is only one of a number of symbol systems which people use to express and share meaning and must therefore be appreciated in its relationship to other forms of expression such as images, sounds, music and electronic communication (Hobbs, 1996a). Changes in communication technologies over the past one hundred years have created a cultural environment that has extended and reshaped understandings of literacy. Literacy is no longer simply a matter of acquiring and decoding, comprehending and producing but now includes the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and communicate in a variety of modes. It is, as Dwyer (2001) suggests, more an 'integrated complex of language and thinking processes and skills

incorporating a range of habits, attitudes, interest and knowledge, serving a range of purposes in different contexts' (p. 118). An expanded concept of text now operates to include texts of all types and from various cultural contexts. Where being literate once meant that a person could read and write, today a literate person is competent in reading and understanding all manner of texts and is able to function responsibly as a citizen. Literacy is not viewed as a single unitary skill to be applied across disciplines but as various social practices and abilities that relate to purpose and contexts and are intricately connected to practice.

Religious Literacy

The naming of curriculum literacies has also become common practice. One such curriculum literacy is 'religious literacy'. Religious literacy is different from what Lo Bianco (2000) calls religious-based literacy, a practice of devotional reading of holy books or holy words that is often restricted by gender and by age (p. 103). Religious literacy must encompass the kind of competencies that Green (1988) suggests as essential dimensions of literacy: the operational, the cultural and the critical dimensions. The operational dimension involves 'competency with regard to the language system' (p. 160). It is concerned with the way individuals use 'language in literacy tasks in order to operate effectively in specific contexts' (Green, 1988, p. 160). The cultural dimension encompasses the meaning aspect of literacy including events that are not only '*context* specific but also entail a specific *content*' (p. 160). The cultural dimension recognises that there is a mutually informing relationship between the language system and the meaning system. The critical dimension has to do with the 'social construction of knowledge' (p. 162). Implicit in this dimension of literacy is critique, which for Green means that 'individuals should not simply participate in culture but should in various ways transform and actively produce it' (p. 163). Religious literacy, at base level, involves learning and understanding the language associated with a particular religious tradition but further implies that a level of interpretation and analysis is available. In today's religiously plural world, religious literacy also requires some knowledge and understanding of at least the major world religions and appreciation for the contribution religion makes to culture.

Dwyer (2001) supports the idea and sees certain advantages in bringing the term 'religious literacy' to the literacy table. He describes it as a metaphor for an approach to religious education that is strictly educational rather than catechetical in nature, and while he has other reservations regarding the term 'literacy' because of its broad interpretations within the community, he promotes bringing religious literacy into general discussion. He asks if there is a specific language for religious education and what its connection to other curriculum areas might be. He also considers the conversation regarding different understandings of religious education (Dwyer, 2001, pp. 120–121).

The term 'religious literacy' is mainly used by Australian religious educators who emphasise an educational approach to the teaching of religion and who may

be reflecting the Australian Government's discourse on achieving higher levels of literacy and numeracy. Religious literacy may, as Moran (1989) says, 'hold the key to thinking through a developed meaning of religious education' (p. 225) just as the interaction between traditional religious language and secular language might find a new 'mediation to confront ancient wisdom with modern knowledge and at the same time uncover the religious traditions in secular language' (Moran, 1989, p. 29).

Visual Literacy

Since the invention of the printing press and the subsequent concentration on achieving mass literacy, schools and other institutions of learning have relied particularly on the printed word. Today, however, there are many literacies and some scholars argue that too much time in schools is being spent on print literacy to the detriment of other literacies. One of the literacies needing further development is visual literacy. While the concept of visual literacy did not appear to capture the attention of educators until film and television were identified as two of the most powerful influences on the behaviour and knowledge of students, it nonetheless is an important ability to acquire.

Dondis (1973) challenges teachers to increase understandings of visual literacy when he says:

if the invention of moveable type created a mandate for universal verbal literacy, surely the invention of the camera and all its collateral and continually developing forms makes the achievement of universal visual literacy as an educational necessity long overdue (p. ix).

Visual literacy theory has developed and borrowed ideas from philosophy, art, linguistics, perceptual psychology, imagery theory and communication research. It is different from verbal literacy because each image, illustrative text or film requires an understanding of the visual grammar used. Whether singly or in sequence all pictures have a lexicon of their own. Knowing how messages are constructed helps the reader better interpret the meaning of the work.

The predominance of images as a means of communication cannot be overstated. We are all influenced, taught and manipulated by all kinds of visual information from television, computers, advertisements, body language and films. The ability to read and write well in verbal languages is no longer sufficient. It is now essential to develop the ability to read visual images.

Mitchell (1994) also postulates that visual images are now more important in communicating meaning than words. Kress (2000) suggests that the traditional roles assigned to written and visual texts have been reversed and that visual texts now carry most of the meaning, while written texts are used merely to comment on visual texts.

People construct their identities and futures in relation to the cultural texts they encounter. 'Seeing comes before words...the child looks and recognises before it

can speak...Seeing establishes our place in the world' (Berger, 1972, p. 7). Children are introduced to the world through images and for some time they continue to learn in multidimensional environments. It has been suggested that perhaps as much as eighty per cent of what we know we have learned visually. Learning from images requires a different skill from learning from printed words. In print we learn from static lines that were directed by the technology of the printing press; information was therefore linear and often sequential. Today, however, the traditional linear way of thinking is being complemented by a relational, interdependent mode of thinking with interactive images (Fredette, 1994).

To date little has been done in religious education classrooms to enhance or harness the visual literacy of students. While many teachers use a variety of texts to enrich the teaching of religion and appear to be comfortable moving between textbook, newspaper, film and videotape, they nonetheless provide little instructional support in helping students analyse the messages of such texts. Films are currently used in classrooms to illustrate what is being said rather than as texts which interact with the biblical text. While a few teachers have made efforts at teaching visual literacy, it has not been part of the official curriculum of religious education.

The incorporation of visual literacy as an essential component of the Creative Arts approach to religious education should empower students to critique images and ultimately become critical readers and interpreters of texts, whether verbal or multimodal.

Multimodal Literacy

Over the last two to three decades a revolution has taken place in the area of communication. It is now widely recognised that meaning is transmitted through a variety of modes such as images, page layout, screen formats; audio modes comprising music, and sound effects; gestural modes such as body languages and sensuality; spatial modes including the meanings of environmental space, architectural space. Thus all meaning-making is multimodal (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000, p. 28).

The dominance of the visual in many areas of public communication has in Kress' (2000) opinion dislodged written language from the central position it once held. According to Kress (2000), multimodality can be thought of in three ways:

First, all texts are multimodal...no texts can exist in a single mode, so that all texts are always multimodal although one modality among these can dominate. Second, there are texts and objects (of a semiotic kind) which exist predominantly in a mode or modes other than the (multi) mode of language. And third, there are systems of communication and representation which are acknowledged in culture to be multimodal (pp. 187–188).

An ancient form of multimodality is said to be the religious practice of reading holy books accompanied by rocking and other gestural practices. These movements and gestures were seen to be critical to the reading process since

relation between reader and text involves transcendence. Committing sacred words to the body, that is infusing the body or embodying the word and its transcendent knowledge, is a meaning-making (or meaning-receiving) form of communication that is not readily identifiable in English or any other Western practice (Lo Bianco, 2000, p. 104).

Some practices used by Shakers and Christian mystics could be also considered as multimodal (Lo Bianco, 2000, p. 104).

According to Cope and Kalantzis (2000), the key to understanding multimodal meaning is hybridity and intertextuality. Hybridity 'highlights the mechanisms of creativity and of culture-as-process as particularly salient in contemporary society' (p. 29). Today people create by 'hybridising', using established materials and conventions in new ways and within new areas of meaning. Some popular music provides examples of hybridity in that it uses and combines music from various cultures and traditions. For example, religious music such as Gregorian Chant has in some recordings been interwoven with electronic music. Intertextuality refers to the multifaceted way in which meaning is formed (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 30) and relies on the reader to make links and references across texts.

According to Lo Bianco (2000), 'many students already utilise complex literacy awareness daily: literacies which invoke ethnic, ideological, religious, script-technical and nation-identity statuses' (p. 101). Multimodal literacy should provide students with a durable and transportable knowledge and skills for participation in a rapidly evolving communication environment.

Towards Practice: Reading Texts

'Seeing' pictures may appear to be a simple matter, but it is not. The act of seeing is cognitively driven (Fredette, 1994). Studies have revealed that viewers of all ages do not divide their attention equally among the different areas to be seen and indeed may miss some aspects altogether. If, for example, students have not noticed certain aspects of a visual text, teachers may find it useful to guide their students' attention. Students could learn to read a text through being encouraged to focus on a particular level and gradually, through a series of exercises that explore a particular aspect such as description, analysis of form, creative interpretation, and critical interpretation, could gain increased facility in reading. According to Fredette (1994), attention to sensory and formal properties is an important starting point for novice viewers. By being asked questions about what they see, novice viewers begin to focus and name what they are seeing and then, by paying attention to various properties, they begin to develop skills in analytical seeing, pattern determining, organising and reorganising information, and paying attention to fine details. Fredette adds the

levels of creative and critical interpretation, which are higher-level process skills. Critical interpretation of a visual image involves responses to certain types of visual content that may directly illustrate the cultural or the socio-political context of a work. Expanding prior knowledge through a cultural studies investigation also helps to facilitate critical interpretation and to unpack multiple meanings contained in texts. Rather than the teacher using a 'teacher centred instruction' approach, it will be of more educational value to students if an inquiry process is employed.

Crumlin (2001), building on Freedberg (1989), suggests that a way to enter a work of art is to explore it in four layers. The first layer is uncovered when people respond to the question, 'What do you see?' The second layer, iconography, is the story or narrative to which the text refers. The third, iconology, involves researching the cultural, social and political context of the artist and the time in which the work was created and how this is reflected in the work. The fourth layer referred to, as the beholder layer, beyond subject matter and recognition of iconography involves the relationship developed between viewer and text. Entering into the work this way may bring the viewer to new knowledge or push the viewer to the edge (the boundaries of what they know and understand) to where they may not want to go.

The creative arts may be used at many levels of the teaching process. The ability to learn from the creative arts is determined by two important factors. These are what the learner knows and what skills the learner has acquired for interpreting the creative arts. The 'texts' selected should encourage students to think about what they are seeing and experiencing in relation to what they are learning. Another important factor in the process is the strategy the teacher uses to guide or direct the learner's attention to the central attributes of the 'texts'. 'Knowing how messages are constructed helps the reader appreciate the artistry involved and helps better interpret the meaning of the work' (Hobbs, 1996a, p. 3). Access to the message entails being able to decode symbols, and to locate, organise and retrieve information. The ability to analyse a message is assisted by knowing the historical, political or economic contexts of its production and the history of its consumption. Every reading of a 'text' has the potential to produce multiple meanings.

Film and Television

The uses to which teachers put film and television in the classroom are many and vary from enrichment or motivation to 'teaching the lesson'. When television is used merely as a way of delivering facts or information, it reflects Bruner's transmission model where learning is a process of sending information by those who know more to those who know less. On the other hand, when television, video and other media are used well, they can be significant aids in the teaching and learning process (Hobbs, 1996a). The most inefficient usage occurs when these media are used as time-fillers. Even when film and television are being carefully used as a teaching tool, teachers face two impediments to their usefulness as students have been conditioned by years of habitual viewing that has reinforced their belief that

film and television are casual pastimes and exist solely to entertain. Hobbs (1996a) tells us that students associate their view of television at school with their home viewing, which is casual and relaxed. Postman (1986) identifies the entertainment dimension of film and television as dangerous to teaching. He further perceives the style of learning promoted on shows like *Sesame Street* as hostile to book or school learning since it reinforces the view that television is synonymous with entertainment. For Postman (1986),

Our politics, religion, news, athletics, education and commerce have been transformed into congenial adjuncts of show business, largely without protest or even much popular notice. The result is that we are a people on the verge of amusing ourselves to death (p, 4).

Many would not totally agree with Postman but teachers would do well to take his views into consideration.

Over twenty years ago, Apple (1979) demonstrated how political and economic forces rather than pedagogy and epistemology shaped the content and format of textbooks. These forces also shape multimedia. Multimedia allow more subtle influences than those available through the written text and Polin (2000) urges educators to pay attention not only to the motivation behind publishing and production decisions but also to the classroom uses to which the material is put.

DeVaney (1994) identifies popular culture as another of the influences that impacts on the teaching and learning process. She says:

Popular culture remains as a teacher who competes with the classroom teacher for students from pre-school through college, whether educators care to acknowledge it or not. It has a profound effect on the construction of student knowledge. It has a profound effect on the internal construction of students' perception of the Other. These effects should not be ignored (DeVaney, 1994, pp. 356–357).

Therefore it is essential that religious educators pay attention to the visual images they use in religious education classrooms.

Films impact strongly on popular culture, grappling in various ways with people's questions, values and meaning, making these available for reflection and interpretation even while reshaping them. As visual stories that use imaginative constructs and story in sight, sound, and movement, films can invite people to explore religious issues.

The power of mass media messages and how individuals interpret them is often underestimated. The influence of television on shaping opinions on such serious issues as war is a new phenomenon. Bray (2001) has drawn our attention to television and how it

has shaped our perceptions of war. Footage from America's war in Vietnam—the first to receive comprehensive television coverage—profoundly changed

how many in the United States, and Australia, perceived war. Moving pictures of the grim carnage there destroyed forever any glorious fantasies of derring-do which may have survived World War II (Bray, 2001).

Bray further believes that war, in turn, is shaping television and instances the number of film and television shows cancelled after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack in New York. Schools need to help students process this complex interaction.

A New Proposal

Harris (1979) believed that we have not paid sufficient attention to the arts in religious education nor have we studied aesthetic or artistic development. Rather, we have tended to concentrate and rely on fields such as educational psychology, pedagogy, theology and epistemology to develop the curriculum area. She argued that the gap between the arts and the teaching of religion should be bridged:

(Religious education is) a field where the religious intersects with education, and the aesthetic is a dimension of both...Religion, with its ties to creativity and feeling, has always been the vehicle through which peoples have expressed their relationship to the divine. Education, with its focus on the intentional reconstruction of experience, has relied strongly on the creation of *conceptual* form, but is in need of the *perceptible* form more proper to art. Thus, the field can only be enhanced by inclusion of the aesthetic (p. 143).

It is from such a position that the Creative Arts approach to the teaching of religious education makes its departure.

A Critically Engaging Creative Arts Approach

Building on sound educational practice, the Critically Engaging Creative Arts (CECA) Approach to religious education begins with known or familiar material then moves to the unknown or unfamiliar. The Critically Engaging Creative Arts (CECA) Approach to teaching religion, unlike other approaches, is not specifically related to content but rather to the way students are invited to take part in the process of learning through critical engagement with the arts. The CECA Approach comprises three movements, an Inquiry movement, an Investigation movement, and an Appraisal and Demonstration movement. The three movements are briefly described below. While this paper has confined itself to one area of religious education, namely biblical education, my contention is that the CECA Approach could be used in many, if not all, areas available for study within religious education.

The Inquiry movement invites students to recall what they know about a particular character or event and if possible to identify how they acquired this information. The Investigation movement can be broken into two parts. The first part deals with various artistic interpretations of the chosen character or event while the second part deals with relevant biblical texts relating to the character or event. The final movement, the Critical Appraisal and Demonstration movement, requires that students not only critically appraise the texts in the light of their investigations but also demonstrate or represent their acquired knowledge in a new or unfamiliar context.

General Introduction to the CECA Approach

Teachers interested in using a CECA Approach need to begin by selecting a biblical story, character or event. Consider, for example, a series of lessons based on the book of Ruth. In preparation for the class, the teacher would collect a wide variety of 'texts' (pictures, songs, movies, children's books, artworks, statues) retelling the story of Ruth. The following paragraphs outline how the CECA Approach would operate.

Inquiry Movement

The teacher elicits students' knowledge of the story, event or character chosen ensuring that students indicate sources of their information, that is, whether they remember it from children's Bible stories, movies, pictures or songs. The information provided by the students is sorted and analysed.

Investigation Movement

This movement assists students to gain new knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the story, character or event and is best presented in two parts.

Part A

Part A of the movement focuses on creative arts 'texts' that deal with the chosen character, event or story. Students are provided with or find for themselves examples of texts which retell or represent the biblical text in a different mode. Students then examine, investigate and research the artistic texts using a modified form of cultural analysis. Cultural analysis is

'based on a keen awareness of the critic's situatedness in the present, the social and cultural present from which we look, and look back, at the objects that are always already of the past, objects that we take to define our present culture. Thus, it can be summarised by the phrase 'cultural memory in the present.' As such, it is immediately obvious that cultural analysis entertains an

ambivalent relation to history as it is or has been traditionally practiced...Far from being indifferent to history, cultural analysis problematises history's silent assumption in order to come to an understanding of the past that is different. This understanding is not based on an attempt to isolate and enshrine the past in an objectivist 'reconstruction', nor on an effort to project it on an evolutionist line not altogether left behind in current historical practice. Nor is it committed to deceptive synchronism. Instead, cultural analysis seeks to understand the past as *part of* the present, as what we have around us, and without which no culture would be able to exist' (Bal, 1999, p. 1).

When this section of the investigation is complete students should be able to use the evidence they have uncovered to draw some conclusions regarding various perspectives presented in the artistic texts.

Part B

Part B examines biblical texts related to the story, character or event and introduces students to some of the approaches of contemporary biblical investigation to enhance their research and analysis of relevant biblical texts. For instance the idea of a hermeneutic of suspicion or reading the story looking for gaps and omissions may be introduced to the students. When this section is complete, students should be able to use the evidence they have uncovered to draw some conclusions regarding various perspectives presented in the biblical texts.

Critical Appraisal and Demonstration Movement

This movement is in two parts and requires students to critically engage with the biblical texts presented and demonstrate or represent their knowledge in a new or unfamiliar context.

Part A

Using the information gathered from their research and analysis in the Investigation movement, students begin to re-interpret all of the relevant texts in the light of their newly acquired information.

Part B

When all the information has been presented and collated, students are invited to demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge by re-presenting the character or event in the light of what they have learned. They may for instance write a children's book or a newspaper article or a song incorporating their newfound knowledge.

While my experience with the CECA Approach has been predominantly with secondary level students, I nevertheless believe that the approach has possibilities for every level of education from Pre-school to Year 12 and beyond.

Conclusion

The Critically Engaging Creative Arts Approach described in this chapter has provided an example of how the creative arts might be utilised and applied to the classroom teaching of religion. The discussion focused on the creative arts and religion, visual and multimodal literacy, combined with counter readings such as feminist approaches to scripture, and illuminated the 'end' of the Critically Engaging Creative Arts Approach. The approach was presented in generic form. I contend that the Critically Engaging Creative Arts Approach could be used in many if not all areas available for study within religious education and that it provides a creative and interesting way to dialogue with 'texts' and revitalise the teaching of Religious Education.

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THE IMAGES OF GOD OF MIDDLE SECONDARY SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Dr. Veronica (Rose) Duffy

Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Sale, Australia

Introduction

This chapter summarises the main conclusions of the author's doctoral study on *The Images of God of Middle Secondary School Adolescents* (Duffy, 2002) and considers their implications for education in spirituality and religious education. The doctoral study built upon earlier research in the field of adolescent spirituality, in this case, adolescent spirituality within a religious framework; hence it speaks of 'religious spirituality' or religious expressions of spirituality. It is the largest Australian quantitative study in the field of spirituality that explores in the particular area that explored middle secondary school adolescents' images of God. It provides insights into Australian adolescents' thinking about the nature of God, which is a focus that is at the heart of Christian belief. Since this is such a wide-ranging study involving 1,000 students in seven Catholic Secondary schools in Victoria, responding to 112 questions, the findings have the potential to be generalised for middle adolescents in similar schools throughout Australia. This sizeable Australian study can therefore be compared with similar studies overseas and it makes a significant contribution to research in the field of adolescent spirituality. It also may influence the design of future religious education curricula regarding the spirituality of young people and the factors shaping it.

In this chapter, the major question of the research is addressed, namely, 'What are the images of God of middle secondary school adolescents and what influences shape these images?' The aims and the findings of the study are described; and the conclusions that were drawn as a result of the research are then presented. These are followed by the recommendations arising from these conclusions. Further, strategies are suggested for the implementation of the recommendations.

Aims of the Study

The research reported in this study aimed to:

1. identify the need for additional data on the images of God of Australian Catholic youth;
2. identify where the images of God of middle secondary school adolescents are located within a comprehensive spectrum of images of God in Catholic theology and Scripture;
3. explore the extent to which the data on middle adolescents' images of God harmonise or question findings from existing research on images of God;
4. report on some of the formative factors that may have influenced middle adolescents' images of God;
5. consider implications for education in spirituality and religious education.

The first aim was addressed in the review of key literature in the field which identified a particular need for further Australian data. The second aim was addressed in the presentation, discussion and analysis of the findings of the research. The third aim was addressed through the location of the images of God of the middle adolescents in secondary schools within a comprehensive spectrum of images of God in Catholic theology and Scripture. The participants' images of God were also compared with existing research on middle adolescents' images of God. The fourth aim was addressed in the reporting and analysis of the formative factors on the middle adolescents' images of God. The fifth aim will be addressed in this chapter, which considers the implications and recommendations for education in youth spirituality and religious education.

Synthesis of Findings Concerning the Images of God of Middle Secondary School Adolescents

Finding 1: The Participants' Key Images of God were Those of 'Jesus Christ' and Images Drawn from Nature

This finding addressed the principal aim of the study, as well as the related aim of exploring the extent to which participants' images of God supported or challenged those of a range of literature in the field. The images of God most frequently reported by participants, were 'Jesus Christ' and images drawn from 'nature' such as 'the sun'. The latter images indicate the participants' awareness of their environment, as well as the influence of nature on their spirituality. This finding supports that of Leavey et al. (1992) who associated adolescence as the life-stage in which God was identified with nature.

The finding that Jesus Christ was the participants' favourite image of God implies the strong association that they saw between Jesus Christ and God, in fact, some students consistently identified Jesus with God and used the terms 'Jesus Christ' and 'God' interchangeably. Their understanding of Jesus Christ indicated support

for the Church's teaching of the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, as their two most frequently reported descriptors of Jesus were Son of God (62%) and Son of Mary (58%). Their responses also emphasised the role of Jesus as 'Saviour'. Hence in reporting that Jesus was their favourite image of God, the participants indicated support for the image of Jesus presented in Scripture and theology, in particular, the unique relationship between Jesus Christ and God. It is significant that they not only saw the importance of Jesus Christ in terms of his relationship with God, but were attracted by the image that they had of Jesus Christ, and by the image of God that he revealed to them, since the image of God presented by Jesus Christ was nominated as their favourite image of God.

Finding 2: There was Widespread Belief in the Trinity as an Image of God

The orthodox nature of the participants' responses to questions about Jesus Christ was also evident in their responses to questions about the Trinity. Such responses indicated their belief in the Trinity as an image of God. This is an important finding as the Trinity is the key image of God in Catholic theology. This finding supported that of the *Catholic Church Life Survey* (Australian Catholic Bishops Pastoral Research Project, 1996), which found that over half of its participants thought of God in Trinitarian terms.

The second aim of the study was to identify where the images of God of the middle secondary school adolescents were located within a comprehensive spectrum of images of God in Catholic theology and Scripture. The findings concerning the participants' beliefs about Jesus Christ and the Trinity indicate that these beliefs are consistent with the images of God in Catholic theology and Scripture. However, the participants rarely reported some scriptural and theological images which included those of an exacting, challenging God (Mills, 1998, p. 63). Further, they rarely used titles of God such as 'Lord' and 'YHWH', indicating that such terms did not commonly form part of their experience, that they did not understand them or that they did not represent their usual or favourite images of God.

Finding 3: The Participants' Images of God and the Qualities they Associated with God were Positive in Nature

The positive nature of the images was evident in the frequent references to images such as 'creator', 'lover', 'forgiver', 'redeemer' and 'listener', as well as in the finding that they did not refer to God as 'demanding', 'judging', or 'punishing'. The positive attitude towards God was also reflected in the qualities participants associated with God, such as 'loving', 'powerful', 'good', 'religious' and 'active'. Respondents also rejected qualities that could be thought of as negative such as 'weak', and those not commonly associated with God such as 'patient'. These images and qualities support many of those found in the literature review of this thesis. One example is that of (Flynn, 1993, p.308) who found that the participants in his study thought of God as a loving, personal friend.

Finding 4: God was Thought of as Both Present and Transcendent

The fact that participants thought of God as both present and transcendent was evident particularly in their responses to the question about where God lived. Almost half of the participants stated that God lived in 'heaven'. The respondents did not always define 'heaven', however some stated that it was 'above' and used images such as 'clouds' and 'sky' to convey this sense. Others considered that heaven was 'everywhere', 'in our minds' and 'in our hearts'. This belief that God was in some sense different from and greater than humanity, while remaining near and in some sense attainable, is another example of the way in which the participants' views reflected those of Catholic theology and Scripture.

Finding 5: There were Fewer Abstract than Anthropomorphic Images of God

Both abstract and anthropomorphic images of God were reported by the participants, and this finding is related to another important conclusion, that participants retained anthropomorphic images of God even after they had developed the capacity to think of God in abstract terms. This finding differs from Bradbury's (as cited in Hyde, 1990) who found that adolescents no longer had material images of God after the age of fourteen.

Finding 6: The Anthropomorphic Images of God were Male, and Participants Exclusively Used Masculine Language about God

Participants in the present study used a variety of male anthropomorphic images of God, such as 'father' and 'old man'. Masculine language for God was also evident in the results, and no feminine images of God were used by the participants, in fact, they indicated their rejection of such images.

Finding 7: There were More 'Missing' Responses to Questions Suggesting Unfamiliar Images of God

The high number of missing responses to questions using unusual images for God such as comparing God with a 'plant', a 'building' and an 'animal', may indicate that some participants found it difficult to think about God using unconventional imagery. They may have confused the symbol with the reality and considered that some of these symbols were unworthy of God. There was evidence of such thinking in some of the participants' comments, for instance, those stating that responses were not given because participants thought of God as unique, hence no image could do justice to God. Others wrote 'all' in response to these questions because they believed that God was everywhere, thus no one person or thing could represent God. The responses to these questions should also be treated with caution as they may be based on autosuggestion and do not represent the ways in which the participants usually thought about God.

Finding 8: There was an Overall Correspondence between Participants' Spirituality and that of the Literature in the Field

This finding addresses the second aim of the study, which was to explore the extent to which the data on middle adolescents' images of God harmonises with or questions the findings from existing research on images of God. The responses provide evidence that the features of adolescent spirituality emerging from this study, correspond with those of key literature about adolescent spirituality. A comparison between them shows that 'fear' was the only characteristic in the literature of adolescent spirituality not found in the results of this research. The characteristics shared by this study and the literature, include the importance placed on individuality and freedom; a concern for social justice and tolerance; a privatised belief system; a personal search for meaning and an appreciation of relationships. Participants also indicated their appreciation of people who listened to them. Both the study and the literature indicate that many young people are irregular in their Church attendance (CCLS ACBPRP, 2001) and that most do not attend at all.

Synthesis of Findings Concerning the Factors that Led Participants to Think about God and Shaped their Images of God

This synthesis addresses one of the aims of the study, which was to report on some of the formative factors shaping middle adolescents' images of God.

Finding 9: Parents were the Most Important Influence on Participants' Images of God

This study indicated that parents were the most important influence on the formation of their children's images of God. For instance, participants reported that in their opinion, most of their images of God were learnt from both parents. These images and qualities were positive in nature and included images associated with God as 'loving', 'powerful' and 'good'.

Finding 10: Reflection on Death was the Key Factor Leading Participants to Think about God

'Death' was a key influence on the participants' thinking, as reflecting on 'the death of a loved one' led almost half of them to think about God, while a large number thought of God when reflecting on their own death. This finding also parallels that of the CCLS (ACBPRP, 2001), which found that family death was the event that most frequently led middle adolescents to an awareness of God.

Finding 11: Religious People and Good People Led Participants to Think about God

An area in which the findings of this research support that of the literature of adolescent spirituality is the claim that heroes and role models are formative influences on the spirituality of young people (Flynn, 1993, p.412). Most people listed by the participants were either religious figures or contemporary people well known for doing good, such as Nelson Mandela, and Mother Teresa. People who were not well known, but who cared for others, such as volunteers, midwives, friends and carers were also included. Some of their valued characteristics were that they were 'loving', 'forgiving' and 'understanding'—the same qualities that they associated with God.

Finding 12: Religious Education Classes and Liturgies were Key School Experiences

Thirty percent of participants most frequently reported religious education classes and liturgies as the factors at school that most often led them to think about God. With this question, participants were asked to supply the factor themselves; they were not given a range from which to choose, hence adding weight to their responses, as their choice was not limited. Further, as well as indicating the influence of religious education on them, the participants also seemed to have a reasonably wide ranging and theologically sound set of images of God, hence it is reasonable to conclude that the religious teaching they had received has been successful in this regard. This finding, then, underlines the importance of the religious educators in shaping their students' spirituality, including their images of God.

Finding 13: There was Evidence of the Influence of Privatisation and Secularisation on the Participants

A major conclusion of the study was that the privatisation of belief and the secularisation of Western society had influenced the spirituality of the participants. Many believed that it was possible to have faith in God but not belong to any religion, or to attend Mass or Church, or to talk about religious belief. They claimed that it was possible to believe in God without such belief having much effect on their lives, and that faith was not essential for a happy life. Participants also stressed the importance of individual choice and freedom in religious matters. On the other hand, the influence of the Church was indicated by participants' claims that their images of God had been formed by the Church. They also reported that belonging to a parish community, and attendance at Mass or Church services and reading the Bible, also led them to think about God.

The participants', often contradictory, views raised questions concerning the form of their spirituality and its relationship with Church and religion. Their responses indicated that they were as secularised as the young people referred to in other writings in the literature such as those of Crawford (1993). However the participants

in this study indicated that such secularisation was not incompatible with having an extensive range of images and beliefs about God. There was evidence that they could use religious language about God but they claimed that religion had little or no impact on their lives. However a proportion of the participants claimed that they did see a link between religion and life, and for those students, their spirituality was informed by religion.

For those who thought that the Church was irrelevant to their lives, there was a contradiction that might well apply not only to individuals but to different groups. Those who said that religion did influence their lives, did have a spirituality, and such a spirituality might draw on their experience of the Church and their education in the Catholic faith tradition. However, at the same time, they might not think that the Church was such a compelling presence that they would want to be a part of it, or of its regular practice. Hence they could be drawing on religion for some parts of their spirituality while not wanting to be practising members. This certainly underlines a division between religiosity (as measured by Church attendance and involvement) and an active spirituality.

Young people may well be religious but they do not want to exhibit it. The participants in this study indicated that they might have assimilated much of what was offered in religious education, and in their experience of the Church, but they were hesitant to discuss their beliefs. The age group of the young people could exacerbate such a privatisation as they were at a developmental stage in which developmental theorists such as Piaget indicate that the influence of the peer group is strongest. For example, Fowler (1981) claimed that adolescents developed a new and deeper awareness of self and others, that interpersonal relationships were central to their lives, and that conformity with the group was critical to their lives.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The major conclusions of this study led to the recommendations that follow. Before presenting these recommendations, it is important to declare that the researcher, who is an experienced Catholic religious educator, brings a particular value position and certain assumptions to the formation of these recommendations. This position, which assumes that education for spirituality and for religious understanding is potentially a positive part of a whole education for the young person, means that the recommendations are designed to help to improve and develop the quality of this education.

This thesis, in particular, along with other research studies, report that in young people's views, a range of experiences affect their images of God. The ways in which such experiences affect the development of their images of God are complex. While teachers within religious education in Catholic schools might wish to give their students access to a wide range of traditional Catholic images of God, including feminine images, it is difficult to propose simple strategies that might be effective in providing such access. Even if access to a range of images is provided within religious education, this does not mean that students will appropriate such images and incorporate them into their personal spirituality.

Nevertheless, educators can develop some curriculum planning and strategies that will provide what they hope might be the most favourable educational environment within which young people's education in the images of God might be fostered.

Recommendation 1: Range of Images of God

One of the first steps in the planning process would be to alert teachers to the possibility that the scope they give to this topic within their own teaching can be an important spiritual resource for students in religious education. Curriculum planning could take into account the range of images that it was thought desirable to include as part of the students' religious education

Recommendation 2: Feminine Images of God

If those responsible for the curriculum of the school accept that there appears to be little reference to feminine images of God, then a starting point might be to ensure that feminine images and a language of spirituality about God which does not exclude the feminine, might appear in the curriculum documentation that underpins Catholic school religious education. This might also be true of the prayer and liturgy of their schools. In this way, staff and students may grow in awareness of feminine language about God and of feminine images of God. This may enrich the young people's imagery about God and help females, in particular, to feel a closer connection to God when comparisons can be made between the divinity and the female experience of humanity.

Recommendation 3: Analysis of the Religious Education Curriculum

The range of scriptural and theological images of God as considered in the early chapters of this thesis may be of use in the development of a template of images of God that could be used for reviewing the images of God represented in curriculum and student resource material in religious education. As yet, there has not been an analysis of Catholic religious education curricula resource materials that might indicate whether or not the treatment of images of God in current materials is appropriate. It was beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate this question, however such a research task may be undertaken if it were considered that the range of images of God represented in religious education curriculum materials needed appraisal.

Recommendation 4: Scriptural and Theological Images of God

The influence of religious educators on students has been acknowledged in this study and in other literature in the field, hence, in terms of this study, it is important that such educators have an understanding of images and qualities of God that are based on scriptural and theological foundations. This may mean that those providing pre-service teacher education courses in religious education may need to examine the scriptural and theological courses they offer. This will help to ensure that the

teaching offered to future students will be well founded. Current religious education teachers may also need to be provided with ongoing professional development opportunities in these areas. This may have financial and programming implications for Catholic Education Offices and school leaders.

Recommendation 5: Abstract and Anthropomorphic Images of God

It may be possible to provide guidelines for the writers of religious education curricula, which ensure that abstract as well as anthropomorphic images of God are included in new curriculum documents and textbooks. In keeping with the findings of developmental theorists such as Fowler (1981), this study found that, in general, adolescents are able to develop the capacity for abstract imagery. Nonetheless, at the same time, it also found that many adolescents retain their childhood images of God. Hence both forms of images should be included in student curriculum materials.

Recommendation 6: Images of God Drawn from Nature

Literature such as Flynn's (1993) that discusses the place of religious retreats in Catholic schools in Australia emphasises the value of that activity in helping young people think through and talk about questions of spirituality in a more personal way than is usually the case in the more formal classroom. Retreats would therefore offer opportunities for young people to personalise their theology i.e. while they may learn the language and concepts related to images of God in formal classroom religious education, retreats might provide an opportunity for them to personalise these ideas. The success of retreats as a vehicle for spiritual development supports their inclusion in the school curriculum. It is one of the ways in which the school provides students with an opportunity to experience the power and beauty of nature. This study found that images of God drawn from nature were one of the key sources of the participants' images of God, and an important influence on their spirituality.

The findings also support those areas of the curriculum which promote a sense of the wonder of the origins of the universe and of nature, as these were also significant factors leading participants to think about God. The efforts of school communities to provide a school environment creating a sense of peace and beauty, were also endorsed by this study, which found that these were key factors leading participants to think about God.

Recommendation 7: Reflection on Death and Loss

Today there are many Australian schools providing teachers with short courses in grief education such as 'Seasons for Growth'. Many secondary schools have their own school counsellor and they provide access to grief counselling of some kind. These factors indicate awareness within school communities of the need to support students and staff during times of grief. The importance of this awareness is supported by the finding that reflection on death was the most significant factor leading participants to think about God.

Recommendation 8: Prayer and Liturgy

There is evidence in the study that the ways in which prayer/liturgies are conducted in secondary schools are having a positive impact on students. This implies that they are also relevant to the needs and life experience of the students. These conclusions arise from the finding that prayer/liturgies were significant factors leading young people to think about God. It would therefore be important to continue to maintain the current work in school in these areas. This would include an emphasis on music and moments of quiet reflection in prayer/liturgies as this study indicates that both may lead participants to think about God. The settings for prayer/liturgies are also important, as they can create an environment that is conducive to prayer and reflection, and students indicated that they valued times of peaceful reflection. It would also be valuable to promote opportunities for liturgical training and education for teachers so that they may be able to develop in their students an appreciation of good liturgy, and the confidence to lead prayer services and liturgical celebrations.

Recommendation 9: The Role of Parents in the Development of Young People's Images of God

The participants' responses confirmed that in their opinion, parents were the greatest formative influence on their images of God. This finding leads to the question as to what might be done to educate parents in relation to their own images of God and how, in turn, this might have an impact on young people, is a very extensive and complicated process. It could be expected that any theological or religious education that enhances people's grasp of images of God, would in turn be likely to enhance the potential influence that parents would have on the development of young people's images of God.

It would also seem likely that where adults were involved in the life of a local faith community, this might be expected to affect the theological background within which young people's spirituality is nurtured. This study found that those participants who belonged to a parish community found that this experience led them to think about God.

Recommendation 10: Spirituality Resources for Young People

There are a number of ways in which treatment of images of God in the curriculum and in the classroom teaching and learning process could provide spirituality resources for young people, such as the following examples:

- Religious education teachers may provide opportunities for students to talk about their beliefs, in order to encourage them to grow in confidence in speaking about their spirituality. This would be one way of addressing the finding that many participants chose not to talk about their religious beliefs, for a variety of reasons, including inability to do so, and that they were afraid of others' reactions.

- Good religious artwork that is both good art, and represents well-founded theology, could be provided in schools as it has the potential to shape the religious imagination of young people. For instance, many of the participants indicated that their images of God had been shaped by those they had seen in Church. Their responses also indicated a familiarity with well known religious iconography.
- As religious education classes were considered by participants to be one of the key influences at school that led them to think about God, religious educators could be encouraged to continue to use teaching approaches that support adolescent learning.
- As participants indicated, religious figures, compassionate people, carers and listeners had shaped their images of God and led them to think about God, therefore, young people could be introduced to such people through books and other media, as well as through involvement in community service programs. Such people could also be invited to be guest speakers in the school so that they may be able to influence and inspire young people and help to development their spirituality.

Conclusion

The research reported in this thesis sought to identify the images of God of middle secondary school adolescents. It found that the participants had positive images of God that were consistent with the central images of Christianity, such as belief in the image of God as Trinity, and in the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. There was evidence of the influence of privatisation and secularisation on the thinking and religious practice of these adolescents, and in the separation they saw between belief in God and the necessity to belong to a religion. The influence of nature as a source of adolescent spirituality was also evident, as experiences of the natural world were among the greatest influences leading participants to think about God.

The findings resulting from the wide-ranging survey, which forms the basis of this study, have provided insights into the thinking of young people at a significant stage of their development. Such development includes the growth in the capacity to think in an abstract way about God. In seeking to identify the images of God of middle adolescents, this study has indicated the extent to which this capacity is evident in their responses. The findings of the study have therefore added to the body of knowledge concerning the spirituality of adolescents. It has also presented new possibilities for religious teaching and learning during a developmental stage, which offers unique challenges to religious educators. The findings provide points of comparison and contrast with the developmental stages of students who are younger and older than the middle adolescents.

As well as providing insights into young people's images of God, the findings also provide insights into related areas of spirituality such as the people and the factors that influence the development of their spirituality. It offers evidence of the students' attitude to the Church and supports the findings of other research in the

area, in particular, that of the Australian *Catholic Church Life Survey* (ACBPRP, 1996). In turn, the findings of the latter survey add weight to those presented in this study.

A limitation of the study is that it set out to provide a broad overview rather than an in depth analysis. Future studies could explore some of the findings through in depth interviews or case studies. The findings could also be probed through longitudinal studies, in order to test the extent to which images of God changed over time. The conclusions of the study could also be tested with other age-groups, through the use of questionnaires based on the present survey. In this way the present study provides a basis for future research. Such research could include identifying the factors shaping the students' images of God. For example, it could examine whether a correlation existed between particular images of God and the religious, cultural and educational background of families. It could also explore the extent to which abstract images of God developed in later adolescence; the extent to which students with a developed capacity for abstract thought, applied that ability to their thinking about God; the extent to which a balance existed between adolescents' childhood and abstract images of God. Future research could also examine the reasons for the reluctance of adolescents to speak about their faith, the implications of such reluctance and the recommendations that ensue.

Although this study has focused on an aspect of the spirituality of middle adolescents in Victorian Catholic Secondary schools, its findings can be applied to other Australian States and other countries. The study therefore makes a significant contribution to present and future research in the area of adolescent spirituality through its provision of new Australian data on the images of God of young people in the age group of middle adolescence (14–17 years).

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TOWARDS ESTABLISHING A WISDOM DIMENSION IN EDUCATION THROUGH POETRY: AN EXPLORATION OF SOME OF THOMAS MERTON'S IDEAS

Ross Keating

Faculty of Education, Australian Catholic University

Introduction

According to Neil Postman, education should provide an alternative view to that which dominates society so as to provide students with a more balanced outlook on life. This corrective role, Postman argues, needs to be built into a school's curriculum. In the late sixties and early seventies, he saw this role as a subversive one, and argued that students should be allowed to question authority and to approach learning as an act of self-guided exploration. Ten years later, in response to what he saw as largely a commercial, mass-media driven society he promoted the idea of teaching as a conserving activity, and promoted the skills of critical analysis so that students could be made aware of manipulative self-interests acting within society.

In his latest book in this progression, *The End of Education* (1995), his most radical, he continues his appraisal of education in a society that he feels has lost its identity and sense of moral direction. This time he makes the point that schools should not attempt to serve the public but rather 'create' a public; and that teachers need to make this their foremost responsibility. Postman's own solution for this present predicament is for teachers to start with a vision. A vision of their students entering public life 'imbued with confidence, a sense of purpose, a respect for learning, and tolerance'. And for this vision to become reality, he argues, two things are necessary, 'the existence of shared narratives and the capacity of such narratives to provide an inspired reason for schooling' (Postman, 1995, pp 17–18). In his elaboration of this position he places an emphasis on the word 'inspired'. In his view, schools now need common 'gods' more than common goals. Postman then

goes on to suggest five such 'gods' or overarching narratives that could possibly serve as sources of enduring inspiration for students.

All the narratives have a common underlying theme, which is the idea of unity within diversity. His first narrative is that without sacrificing one's cultural, national or religious identity a person 'can be enlarged by adopting the role of Earth's caretaker' (p. 65). This development of an environmental consciousness is something young people and schools have generally embraced. Second is the narrative that says the existential human condition in one of unknowing and in Postman's words 'Therein lies the possibility of our redemption: Knowing that we do not know and cannot know the whole truth, we may move towards it inch by inch by discarding what we know to be false' (p. 67). This creates an educational agenda that celebrates mistakes in learning not as failings but as points of clarification and opportunities towards better understanding. Under this narrative, Postman gives a more humble definition of science as 'a method for correcting our mistakes' and not as popularly imagined 'a source of ultimate truth' (p. 68).

Thirdly, the narrative that encourages dialogue, debate, and experimentation and stands against hardened dogmatism. In Postman's view, 'All points [of view] are admissible. The only thing we have to fear is that someone will insist on putting in an exclamation point [after their point of view] when we are not yet finished [our discussions]' (p. 74). Fourthly, the narrative that says diversity is something to be celebrated as a source of vitality and creativity rather than suppressed in the interests of a contrived notion of shared 'cultural literacy'. In explaining this case, Postman points out 'whenever a language or art form becomes fixed in time and impermeable, drawing only on its own resource, it is punished by entropy. Whenever difference is allowed, the result is growth and strength. Lastly, the narrative of the power of language, about which Postman makes the comment, 'There is, to be sure, a world of 'not-words'. But, unlike all the other creatures on the planet, we have access to it only through the world of words' (pp. 83–84).

Although much can be found within Thomas Merton's writings that directly address all of Postman's proposals, it is the last dimension of the power of language and specifically poetic language that I now wish to explore in the light of some of Thomas Merton's ideas. Merton has been described as a 'spiritual master', a title he would have felt uncomfortable with preferring himself to be known in later life simply as a writer (Hart & Montaldo, 1999, p. 11; Cooper, 1989, p. 167). His extensive writings reflect a person who had a profound understanding of the dignity of the human person, a poet, a seer, a questioner, a social critic, a humorist, and one who had the ability to reach into and express with clarity what lies at the heart of Eastern spiritualities and Western theology.

Knowledge, the Way of Knowing, and the Knower

In any learning situation, three dimensions are always present: knowledge, the way of knowing, and the knower. Various approaches to learning put a different emphasis and value on each of these dimensions. The most dominating epistemological

framework of the twentieth century and still today is science whose methodology has been adopted by modern philosophy, the social sciences, and significant areas of educational research. In this approach emphasis and value is placed on objective, quantifiable knowledge and a single way of knowing: essentially the inductive method. In this approach the subjectivity of the knower has no value except in recording results, and even this may be seen as introducing a distorting factor to the validity of empirical evidence. The dominance of scientific epistemology has led to what has been called the 'religious-fiction' of science (Newman & Holzman, 1997, p. 7). While others such as Huston Smith have warned of its dangers, that it 'edits out spiritual truths in the way X-ray films omit the beauty of faces' (quoted in Cousineau, 2003, p. 10).

Recently, however, the actual categorisation of scientific knowledge as a legitimate form of 'knowledge' has come under question by contemporary theorists such as the social constructionist Kenneth Gergen who writes that

There is little reason to believe that we literally experience or 'see the world' through a system of categories...However, we gain substantially if we consider the world-structuring process as linguistic rather than cognitive. It is through an *a priori* commitment to particular forms of language (genres, conventions, speech codes and so on) that we place boundaries around what we take to be 'the real.'...In Goodman's terms, it is *description* not *cognition* that constructs the factual world (quoted in Newman & Holzman, 1997, p. 27).

From Merton's perspective, so called scientific knowledge is only 'provisional' being that part of our knowing, which is "clear" and non-hidden' – in other words, descriptive, in the sense as outlined by Gergen (Merton, 1971, p. 190). In his writings Merton introduces a far more encompassing epistemology, that of wisdom, which according to him 'embraces and includes science...[for] behind all that is unveiled and 'discovered' [through science], wisdom touches that which is still veiled and covered' (Merton, 1971, p. 190). The critical point here is that Merton does not contrast scientific knowledge with wisdom, or what he calls sapiential knowledge, (for that would be to fall into the scientific, classificatory paradigm) but says it is the hidden aspect of all things beneath their non-hidden or surface 'description' (Kilcourse, 1993, p. 127). He also uses the verb 'touches' for wisdom, thus hinting at an approach that is personal and intimate as opposed to the objective, calculating approach of science. This fits in nicely with his use of the term 'sapiential', which derives from the Latin *sapit*, meaning 'taste'—sapiential knowledge is thus gained by 'tasting', and is accordingly a more experiential kind of knowledge.

Merton calls scientific knowledge 'provisional' for it is incomplete, not total. Wisdom is complete knowledge, known and understood in the knower in the form of a cognitive realisation through direct apprehension or intuition. This kind of knowledge does not appeal to any external authority or objective standards for its credibility but rather appeals directly to the authenticity of a person's own being. This understanding of sapiential knowledge, I would argue, is what is missing from our present educational agenda and urgently needs to be built into our teaching curricula.

Merton describes his own realisation of this type of sapiential knowledge in a poetic manner, which is the only way it can be described (although it is an universally shared experience), as an apprehension, in 'all visible things', of an

invisible fecundity, a dimmed light, a meek namelessness, a hidden wholeness. This mysterious Unity and Integrity is Wisdom, the Mother of all...There is in all things an inexhaustible sweetness and purity, a silence that is a fountain of action and of joy. It rises up in wordless gentleness and flows out to me from the unseen roots of all created things...(Merton, 1977, p. 363).

What this description does is to invite readers, through the agency of words, to 'taste' this type of communion experience for themselves or to affirm their own experience against it. In this specific sapiential learning instance, the knower is of central importance and needs to cultivate the disposition of wholehearted attentive awareness rather than that of a detached observer as in scientific investigations. The qualities of wisdom, 'inexhaustible sweetness' etc which Merton refers to are also to be found expressed in a multitude of ways in the world's wisdom literature as the underlying truths of existence and are named in general terms as truth, love, purity and beauty. These qualities are not the romantic niceties of life as opposed to all that is harsh such as suffering and violence but represent the verities of existence that can spiritually support and comfort a person in the midst of hardship. The proof of this is in the fact of their cross-cultural acceptance and staying power and universal elevation under the title of wisdom.

They are certainly not doctrines to be learnt, thought constructions, scientific conclusions, nor the product of critical rational thought. Rather they are to be discovered built into the very spiritual fabric of existence itself, as Merton found them. To find ('taste') these qualities is to know sapientially. This knowledge does not build bridges, cure diseases nor give a definitive meaning to life; what it does give, which is essential for living, is nourishment for the soul, spiritual health, or what the poet Edward Hirsh calls 'soul culture' Hirsch (1999, p. 8).

In contrast to Merton's description of wisdom as a real presence to be experienced beneath or beyond the descriptive surface of things is that of the following statement by the contemporary theologian Don Cupitt, which is representative of a contemporary nominalistic attitude to language. It represents what could be described as a type of an anti-wisdom manifesto that invites readers only into an interactive world of words that point to nothing beyond themselves:

1. As both philosophy and religion have in the past taught, there is indeed an unseen intelligible world, or spirit world, about us and within us.
2. The invisible world is the world of words and other symbols.
3. The entire supernatural world of religion is a mythical representation of the world of language.
4. Through the practice of its religion, a society represents to itself, and confirms, the varied ways in which language builds its world (Cupitt, 1997, p. xv).

Here we stay firmly lodged on the page where words, now elevated as having a mind of their own, play and perhaps even misbehave without their creator's consent. In this instance words are seen as mere signs with no 'invisible fecundity' illuminating them, stripped of any symbolic value and potentially revealing sapiential presence. Ironically this attitude illustrates distrust in language, in the mysterious ability of words to point to something of value beyond themselves and beyond quantitative formulations. From Cupitt's perspective words have been well and truly flung from the gates of paradise into an unconsoling exile of their own and left to amuse themselves as best they can. In Merton's eyes this would be a world devoid of poetry where wisdom is allowed no revealing presence.

Sapiential Poetry

Working out of the Christian tradition and its symbols, although analogous ideas can be found in other spiritual traditions, Merton elaborated on the unique connection of wisdom and poetic language. For Merton, not all poetry had to be connected with wisdom but as Kilcourse affirms, poetry as an expression of a 'paradise consciousness' was central to his understanding of poetic experience (Kilcourse, 1993, p. 66). This understanding is illustrated, for instance, in his review of Louis Zukofsky's poetry. Here Merton describes how the reader can be given an intimation of a pristine, archetypal Edenic state, the state of the spiritual origin of all things, through the imaginative language of poetry. In a sense, for Merton, all created things contain a vestige of this primordial state, which the poet can penetrate and reveal. Merton writes that

All really valid poetry (poetry that is fully alive and asserts its reality by its power to generate imaginative life) is a kind of recovery of paradise. Not that the poet comes up with a report that he, an unusual man, has found his own way back into Eden: but the living line, and the generative association, the new sound, the music, the structure, are somehow grounded in a renewal of vision and hearing so that he who reads and understands recognises that here is a new start, a new creation. Here the world gets another chance. Here man, here the reader discovers himself getting another start in life, in hope, in imagination, and why? Hard to say, but probably because the language itself is getting another chance, through the innocence, the teaching, the good faith, the honest senses of the workman poet (Hart, 1981, p. 128).

What Merton is suggesting is that for 'fully alive' or sapiential poetry, of which Zukofsky is an example, 'a new creation'—as he calls it—comes into being that radiates the same 'wordless gentleness' that flows out from the unseen roots of all created thing' in nature. Poetry of this kind, in other words, provides a connection to and a communion with life's underlying depth and re-creates it in poetic terms thus affirming its presence. This unique function of sapiential poetry is of vital importance for it directly contributes towards and maintains the spiritual health of a

person—that ineffable quality of being which children generally have in abundance but which tends to become dissipated with adolescence due to lack of proper care and attention. If, however, adolescents are encouraged to cultivate an appreciation of sapiential poetry and come to understand its value as a means to ‘taste’ the unifying wisdom that permeates all things then they will eventually come to see that they are not just isolated psycho-physical beings left to survive in an alien landscape, but are in a certain sense ‘connected’ with all existence. And, most significantly of all, this type of wisdom-filled poetry has the potential gradually to awaken the latent presence of wisdom that is mysteriously resident deep within themselves. Once this occurs then this experience, in turn, can be expressed poetically and celebrated by others in an act of spiritual community.

While some readers, perhaps those conditioned by scientific empiricism, may view this transformative potential of sapiential poetry with scepticism and see it only as a wishful projection of a closely held belief or desire, it is nonetheless a view that has an ancient heritage. Merton himself saw this potential as holding the key to understanding the enduring power of the psalms (Merton, 1956). While the Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz, with whom Merton exchanged a substantial amount of correspondence, noted that the idea of revering poetry as an expression of wisdom or divinity was found in pre-Homeric Greek culture where it was described in terms of an epiphany, that is, ‘an unveiling of reality’:

What in Greek was called *epiphaneia* meant the appearance, the arrival of a divinity among mortals or its recognition under a familiar shape of man or woman. Epiphany thus interrupts the everyday flow of time and events and enters as one privileged moment when we intuitively grasp a deeper more essential reality hidden in things or persons (Milosz, 1996, p. 3).

To understand, experientially, what it means to ‘intuitively grasp a deeper more essential reality’, which I take as being akin to Merton’s idea of knowing sapientially, we need to begin with the question: What is the nature of poetic experience?

Poetic Experience

As master of scholastics at Gethsemani, Merton used Rainer Maria Rilke’s poetry in his classes to illustrate what he meant by poetic experience (Merton, n.d., cassette recording). He supported the view that poetic experience provided a means of nourishing a person’s spiritual life and that it was analogous to religious experience—religious experience being the same kind of experience ‘only deeper’. Indeed one of Merton’s reasons for presenting poetry in his scholastic classes was to help his students gain a deeper appreciation of religious experience.

One of the poems Merton used in his teaching was Rilke’s ‘The Panther’, which was a work that Rilke described as marking a threshold experience in his own understanding of poetry. During his teaching of poetry, Merton stressed to his students that they should firstly ‘get the image, get the picture’, which in his view

was sharpened and made all the more vivid in the imagination of the reader by the sound and rhythm of the language. A clear apprehension of the images, he argued, provided the avenue into the poetic experience of the poem, and to later reflecting clearly upon its possible meaning.

Rilke's poem begins with an image of a panther in a zoo, locked in a cage like a prisoner and pacing about a small circle, which appears to Rilke to be 'like a dance of strength about a centre/in which a mighty will stands stupefied' (Rilke, 1984, p. 65). The last verse, which Merton gave most attention to, reads:

Only sometimes when the pupil's film
soundlessly opens...then one image fills
and glides through the quiet tension of the limbs
into the heart and ceases and is still.

The 'one image' in this verse is that of Rilke whom the panther momentarily sees standing outside the cage. The movement of Rilke's image going inward and penetrating into the heart of the panther, and making contact there, was for Merton analogous of 'how' and 'where' a poet made an interior contact with a poetic object. At the same time, implicitly stated in the poem, the image of the panther, likewise, is passing into Rilke's heart and it is this silent and mysterious interpenetrative contact, in Merton's view, that 'constitutes the poem': it was this mutual deep 'contact', this spiritual encounter, that awakens a new creative consciousness, which could be called poetic consciousness. Such a moment of consciousness, for instance, is the essence of the Japanese verse form, the haiku, which was adopted by many Buddhist Zen masters as a vehicle for the transmission of their wisdom teachings in which the quality of an 'experience' was the real message, not just words, which were only the vehicle (Suzuki, 1973; Yasuda, 1973). It can be seen aptly expressed in the following haiku by the Zen poet Basho, which attempts to capture the experience of a moment of heightened awareness, and in so doing 'stretches' the reader's consciousness to grasp this same high degree of awareness as that experienced by the poet:

In the utter silence
Of a temple
A cicada's voice alone
Penetrates the rocks (Yuasa, 1972, 26).

According to Merton, the actual writing of a poem like Basho's haiku or Rilke's 'The Panther' was through a re-creative perception of the poet's original interpenetrative contact. This re-creative perception took place within and utilised the powers of the poet's imagination. In this imaginative act the original experience became actualised aesthetically and given concrete form. The word 'aesthetic', from the Greek meaning 'perception by the senses, especially by feeling', nicely accords with this imaginative act (Lipsey, 1977, p. 13). The power of the imagination by which the poem was written was not, in Merton's view, a play of fantasy in which the mind passively viewed some superficial and self-generating 'mental movie',

but rather came out of the deep and creative function of the poet's intellect. This was something Merton learned from William Blake (Hart, 1981, p. 424–451). Accordingly, the poem produced, if it was an adequate poem, was not a description of the poetic object, nor a record of the poet's feeling on seeing the poetic object but rather a type of union of the two. In Merton's words the poem represented a 'new being'.

In another of Rilke's poems, 'The Merry-Go-Round', Merton further explored these ideas with his students (Rilke, 1984, p. 85–86). The poem begins:

Under the roof and the roof's shadow turns
this train of painted horses for a while
in this bright land that lingers
before it perishes...

The intervening verses poetically capture the movement of the merry-go-round, the various animals on it, and the captivated children happily whirling around. It concludes with the lines:

And on the horses swiftly going by
are shining girls who have outgrown this play;
in the middle of the flight they let their eyes
glance here and there and near and far away –
and now and then a big white elephant.
And all this hurries towards the end, so fast,
Whirling futilely, evermore the same.
A flash of red, of green, of gray, goes past,
and then a little scarce-begun profile.
And oftentimes a blissful dazzling smile
vanishes in this blind and breathless game.

Reflecting upon his own poetic experience of this work Merton felt that Rilke had made interpenetrative contact with the transient yet beautiful 'imaginative life of childhood'. And in the poem's structure, its music, and particularly its imagery, he felt that Rilke gave beautiful aesthetic form to this contact. At the sapiential level of this poetic experience through the poetic transfiguring of an everyday merry-go-round, Merton suggested that Rilke had imaginatively recreated Eden before the 'fall'—'this bright land that lingers', the land of 'blind and breathless' play, of child-like innocence and purity. In a sense Rilke, had given Eden a new 'face', which could be poetically 'touched' and known sapientially by the reader. 'There it is, Eden, before your poetic eyes' Merton seemed to be saying to his students, 'taste it, experience it, know it!'

None of this makes any sense, however, if the reader cannot imaginatively recreate what the poet had initially experienced. Imaginative connection is a key idea in Merton's understanding of poetry; the reader has to experience what the poet experienced otherwise the poem does not come alive in the consciousness of the reader. Imaginative connection is the electric charge that jumps across from one

consciousness to another. For this to happen words creatively selected and placed on the page to form a poem cannot simply be read but need to be listened to so as to sense their fully revelatory potential and power. Ultimately, in Merton's view, words have been bestowed with the potential to carry the charge of divine utterance:

Language is not merely the material or the instrument which the poet uses...When in the moment of inspiration the poet's creative intelligence is married with the inborn wisdom of human language (the Word of God and Human Nature—Divinity and Sophia) then in the very flow of new and individual intuitions, the poet utters the voice of that wonderful and mysterious world of God-manhood – it is the transfigured, spiritualised, and divinised cosmos that speaks through him, and through him utters its praise of the Creator (Hart, 1981, p. 49).

From this passage, which reads like a type of 'poetic mythology'—Merton's term (Merton, 1966, p. 61)—it is obvious to see why Merton saw poetry as a means for the cultivation of a person's spiritual life—'that wonderful and mysterious world of God-manhood'. In his view, a person's spiritual life grew in direct proportion to that person's openness and the quality of his or her responsiveness to all of creation. And poetry, as he proposed, provided the means, a specific practice, for cultivating a profound depth of responsiveness. This, in short, was Merton's path for the gaining of wisdom in the midst of life. If a person, however, chose to withdraw from life, under the delusion that this was an efficacious spiritual practice, then in Merton's opinion they would eventually suffer a type of spiritual death, for they would be without access to life-giving wisdom. Spiritual death, it could be argued, may also ensue when the environment in which a person lives has become overly lifeless and artificial. This was another issue that Merton addressed.

Personalism

Before the word, *simulacrum*, was popularised by the post-modern cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard, Merton recalls his delight in finding it the Latin Vulgate. He writes that the word

presents itself as a very suggestive one to describe an advertisement, or an over-inflated political presence, or the face on the TV screen. The word shimmers, grins, cajoles. It is a fine word for something monumentally phoney. It occurs for instance in the last line of the First Epistle of John. But there it is usually translated as 'idols'... 'Little children watch out for the simulacra!' – watch out for the national, the regional, the institutional images! Does it occur to us that if, in fact, we live in a society which is par excellence that of the simulacrum, we are the champion idolaters of all history? (Merton, 1968, p. 152).

The world of *simulacra* creates a world of simulation, what Baudrillard calls *hyperreality* and Merton, the world of idols. It is a world without any origin in or connection to reality, and therefore without access to wisdom. And without access to wisdom, as mentioned previously, spiritual 'starvation' soon follows. It is a world that is not formed from a creative act but is indefinitely reproducible from 'miniaturised units, from matrices, memory banks and command models' (Baudrillard, 1983, p. 3). It is a world signified by brand names, in which brand mystique, brand identity, brand placement, and building a brand-loyalty base amongst clients constitutes its existence.

It is a world in which the Ford car company, for instance, can buy Jaguar and pay a staggering 84% of its buying price just for the Jaguar name; it is a world in which, as one commentator observed, 'Put Nike in a school playground to help tackle bullying and you begin to reach the most street-hardened kids'; it is a world in which 'brands generate more [so-called] trust than any institution—government, church, [or] political [parties]'; it is a world in which 'consumers want [to find] readily accessible packaged meanings'—as one brand consultant remarked, 'Someone else has thought through the difficult issues, and they [the consumers] can then align themselves with that' (Bunting, 2001, p. 14). For Merton what most characterised this 'phony' world was its dangerous and rampant misuse of language. As Del Prete states:

Whether in the realm of advertising, politics, art, religion, love, or most destructively war, the nature and use of language could mean the difference between openness, dialogue, and...tautology, control, and manipulation. Language which no longer conveys, or no longer is intended to convey, any semblance of truth or reality is, in Merton's eyes, 'denatured,' neither a means of authentic personal communication, nor a signification for or evocation of reality (Del Prete, 1990, p. 132).

Merton warned that the world of simulacra, of 'denatured' language, actually infiltrates the unconscious and leaves individuals (a whole society) with a 'denatured' identity and sense of self-worth—as if each was nothing more than a brand-labelled item for sale in a constantly changing brand-driven world. In his unfinished work, *The Inner Experience*, Merton called upon Freud's insights to present his notion of how an aspect of a person's 'exterior self' can possibly become 'unconscious'. He argued that

the exterior self is not limited to consciousness. Freud's concept of the superego as an infantile and introjected substitute for conscience fits well my idea of the exterior and alienated self. It is at once completely exterior and yet at the same time buried in unconsciousness (Merton, 2003, p. 25).

This is a penetrating psychological insight and one that may help to explain why the hold of a mass-market, brand-saturated world is so powerful, for the roots of such a world, over time, bury themselves in the individual's unconscious. It perhaps also helps to explain why many people in contemporary society find themselves

in a state of deadened (not heightened) sensibility from which they seek release in moments of escapist non-sense, which are explicitly marketed for them using these exact terms.

As a direct consequence of the condition in which an individual's 'exterior and alienated self' is 'buried in unconsciousness', Merton argues, a 'fake interiorisation' occurs. Although he used this idea to talk about 'false mysticism' and 'pseudo-religiosity' it also helps to explain, on a more mundane level, the insidious hoax that can be spun by the world of *simulacra*: 'Little children watch out for the simulacra!' or you'll be well and truly duped.

Merton's response to this type of cosmetic world was not to outwardly package Christianity as a more appealing 'brand' for understanding life's meaning so that an individual can at least be offered the opportunity of 'purchasing and identifying with the *right* product'. It was to strongly reaffirm a vision of the unique person, made in the image of God, as distinct from the individual whose identity is always precarious, egotistically centred, and constantly in flux depending on what is 'in fashion' at the time (Merton, 1962, p. 38). Merton explained his vision of person in the same way as he presented sapiential poetry, as 'an experience and an attitude, rather than a system of thought' (cited in Kilcourse, 1993, p. 130). The person, for Merton, and here his thoughts on wisdom and science are reiterated, was

an intelligence open to the divine light, not merely to the study of objects—'observable data'. The full dimension of personal fulfilment is to be sought not simply in knowledge and technical control of matter, but in contemplative wisdom which unites knowledge with love above and beyond the subject-object relationship which is characteristic of ordinary empirical observation (Merton, 1966, p. 63).

In Merton's view the person is not unlike the sapiential poem, for both proceed from the same source and both are formed through an act of re-creative perception of what lies at the heart of reality: the poet encountering wisdom through a particular object creates a genuine poem, while the individual encountering wisdom within his or her own being creates their own personal identity in that Image. In both the sapiential poem and the 'created' person, wisdom can be found. And just as scientific knowledge in Merton's view was only a descriptive and 'provisional' knowledge of reality, so too the individual's knowledge of himself or herself as a self-contained entity is only descriptive and 'provisional', waiting to be completed through knowing wisely. Merton explained as much when he wrote:

The individual matures and blossoms out in full personality only when the natural gift of spirit and grace endows our natural capacities with unique and creative powers to *make our own gift* [Merton's emphasis] to the world and to other[s]...The person is the individual not only as a member of the species but as 'image of God', that is to say, as the *free and creative source of a gift to love and meaning* [Merton's emphasis] which, if it is not made and given, is irreplaceable and cannot be given by another (Merton, 1966, p. 63).

For Merton, on this last crucial point hangs the difference between a fulfilled, creative, adult life and what is not. It is a vision that deepens that presented by Postman at the beginning of this paper. The movement of the self-conscious individual into the expansive consciousness of the person as a 'free and creative source of a gift of love and meaning' – 'which cannot be given by another' – is a movement from adolescence into adulthood and could be used to spiritually define adulthood.

In regard to this rite of passage into adulthood, Merton's understanding of sapiential knowledge as an 'experience' gained through a close, meditative-type reading of chosen poems could be seen as providing a type of 'initiation' experience for young people into the world of wisdom as defined by Merton. It could be seen as a type of catalyst or a 'way in' for young people to sense that there is more to life than just surface experience; that inherent in all life, including in the heart of their own being, is a wisdom-presence, which is full of mystery, appeal, and sacredness.

This is of crucial importance in education today for the idea of wisdom as a state of experiential knowing has become all but completely lost and with this profound loss the sense of meaningless and disconnectedness with life amongst many young people remains dominant. Merton's views as I have presented them here suggest the possibility for a much-needed corrective to this drastic situation.

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BUILDING BRIDGES AND RIGHT RELATIONS: A STUDY IN FOSTERING SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND SOCIAL GROWTH THROUGH GROUPWORK SKILLS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Cathy Ota and Lucia Berdondini

Education Research Centre, University of Brighton, UK

Introduction

This chapter brings together two very different arenas of debate and research:

1. How we understand children's spiritual, moral and social growth.
2. The use of groupwork and pupil groups in the classroom.

Building on extensive international research in the area of groupwork in classrooms this chapter presents some findings of the UK based SPRinG Project (Social Pedagogic Research into Groupwork). Acknowledging the contributions of other work in the fields of groupwork and social, spiritual and moral development the chapter seeks to outline how the SPRinG approach to groupwork offers a practical way for practitioners to engage in the holistic growth and development of pupils through building trusting relationships and enhancing pupil groupwork skills. In addition to the positive benefits of this to pupils the chapter will also examine how the role and experience of teachers can be transformed through these different classroom processes and relationships.

Groupwork—An Introduction to the SPRinG Project

Extensive research into grouping, including what is also described as collaborative and co-operative groupwork, has been carried out in the US since early in the twentieth century and to a lesser degree in the UK and Australia. Widely documented

across many studies are the positive benefits of effective, successful groupwork for pupils – for example,

Students felt more liked, accepted and included than their peers in traditional classroom settings, and these feelings extended to the development of positive cross-ethnic relationships (Sharan as cited in Gillies and Ashman, 2003, p. 8).

Co-operative learning is well recognised as a pedagogical practice that promotes learning, higher level thinking, prosocial behaviour, and a greater understanding of children with diverse learning, social and adjustment needs (Cohen as cited in Gillies and Ashman, 2003, p. 13).

This chapter draws specifically on the UK-based SPRinG research project which, since 2000, has worked for four years to investigate effective groupwork in classrooms across the primary and secondary age levels. The project (Social Pedagogic Research into Groupwork) is a collaborative venture between the University of Cambridge (secondary level focus), University of London (8–11 year old focus) and the University of Brighton (5–7 year old focus) and at the time of writing is completing its last remaining months of research. Working with local teachers and schools the project teams have sought to establish what is workable and possible for pupil groups in today's classrooms. The results discussed here emerge from the collaboration of the team at Brighton (Lucia Berdondini, Peter Kutnick, Cathy Ota, Linda Rice, Jennifer Smith) with over 35 teachers and their schools in the south coast of England.

It is the aim of this chapter to consider how engagement with the project's process and training approach to groupwork impacted upon relationships between and among teachers and pupils. A closer examination of this later, but at this point a broader overview of the project and its data collection offers a general context. (The full Brighton SPRinG dataset is still being analysed, and we do not intend to report on the whole range of results in this chapter.) The fuller context of data collection is outlined here to sketch the broader parameters of the study. The initial phase of the project focused on working with teachers to pilot different ideas about how effective groupwork could be developed with pupils and how a training programme in groupwork skills could enhance group processes. A programme grounded in developing trust, communication and problem solving skills was put together and then applied in a number of classrooms. Various cognitive, attitude and personality measures were taken at the beginning and end of the academic year to assess the impact of the intervention. The same tests were also applied to pupils in control classrooms. Regular classroom observations supplemented this macro dataset. Further micro tests consisted of a concept mapping activity in pairs. The task was carried out twice, generally with the same pairings: once in March–April and then again in June–July. One or two pairs were video-recorded in each class as they carried out this task and then interviewed afterwards in their pairs. This same activity and video-recording was repeated with control classes and pupils.

The final year of the project has focused more specifically on implementation as a whole school policy, inclusion and longitudinal data collection from classes who have adopted this social pedagogical groupwork approach over two-three years.

As a collaborative project with teachers the project also has a large body of qualitative data from the teachers themselves: audio taped interviews, peer support meetings for teachers, teacher supervision, planning, reflections on classroom practice, lesson plans, teacher journals and general evaluations—all of which form an important databank offering an insight into the feelings and experiences of pupils and teachers throughout this process.

Echoing findings of previous studies, we find in our data a strong focus on how children's social skills are enhanced through engagement with this particular groupwork process. A further key area of impact has been the changing nature of relationships within the class; both among the children and between the teacher and pupils. It is these threads that bridge the gap between groupwork and children's spiritual, moral and social growth. Before we can explore these findings in closer detail there needs to be a clarification of how the terms spiritual, moral and social growth are being used.

Understanding Children's Spiritual, Moral and Social Growth

Understanding and appreciation of children's spiritual, moral and social growth has, in the last twenty years, been given increasingly greater credence and discussion. We are aware, however, of an inherent danger in using the terms spiritual, moral and social together, as if they can be amalgamated and discussed as one thing. This is not our intention and we fully acknowledge how development or growth in each area has its own distinct characteristics as unique within each person.

That said it is the purpose of this chapter to demonstrate how effective groupwork in classrooms can benefit pupils' growth in a holistic sense, including their spiritual, moral and social selves. So what is being talked about here? It is perhaps easier to say that what we are *not* talking about is religion or religious education. Speaking of spirituality and spiritual education Jane Erricker articulates the same position,

this is not to say that it often *isn't* religious in nature, but that it doesn't *have* to be...it should not be allowed to be the criterion by which *all* human spirituality is judged, particularly not in young people who are striving hard to make sense of themselves and their lives (Erricker, J. 2001, p. 199f).

Similarly the use of moral growth and development is used in this chapter as also disconnected from religion and religious education (see Erricker & Erricker, 2000). Instead when talking of matters spiritual, moral and social we are referring to something fundamentally human and relational (see also Erricker *et al*, 1997; Erricker & Erricker, 2000; Hay, 2001; Bosacki & Ota, 2000). Elsewhere we

have explored how interdependent relationships and dialogue with children, underpinned by genuine engagement and involvement, is crucial for meaning making and identity (Ota, 1998, 2001). This chapter utilises and extends the same understanding of spiritual, moral and social growth, in that ‘unless the child’s experience is truly relational (which includes genuine dialogue) the school will be able to offer little more than estrangement—estrangement spiritually, culturally and morally’ (Ota, 2001, p. 268).

Finally we want to say a word about the use of the terms growth and development. Instead of describing some kind of linear progression from nothingness to an endpoint, we prefer to use the terms as a movement towards increased complexity (for a fuller discussion of this distinction see Ota, 1998, p. 215ff). In this way we are able to acknowledge the worldviews of children that they bring to the classroom—their experiences, narratives and meaning making which all contribute to the spiritual, moral and social selves.

Using Groups and Groupwork in the Classroom—A Process and Training Approach

How are Groups Generally used by Teachers in the UK?

Pupil groupings whether in pairs, small groups or whole class are used by teachers. Groupwork is an undeniably feature of all classrooms. However, a closer inspection of what is actually happening in such groups reveals a wide range of application and experience for pupils and teachers alike. Whilst different types of groupings have been documented in UK classrooms, it would seem that classroom organisation is the main reason why small groups or pairs or pupils are used by teachers (Kutnick in Kutnick & Rogers, 1994, p. 13–15).

To extend this observation we might pose a number of questions. For example, how far do teachers reflect on their use of pupil groups and plan for them? What might be the characteristics of effective groupwork and how can this be achieved with pupils? There are two key issues underpinning this last question. Firstly, for a group to work together the task needs to be a *group* task—it just isn’t a group task if four children are put round a table to work together and then given individual worksheets. This highlights the more complex nature of planning and composing groups; the task needs to be appropriate for the group and enhance its interdependence among the members. The second key issue here is that simply putting four children together round a table and telling them to work together in a group does not necessarily mean they will be able to do so. This point is endorsed by Gillies (2003, p. 50) and Bennett (1994, p. 62) and signals the need for pupils to be trained so that they know what it means to work in a group and the kind of skills they need.

A Closer Look at the Training and Process Approach of the SPRinG Project

The training programme for effective groupwork developed within the SPRinG project has two key elements:

1. training in key groupwork skills;
2. awareness and constructive reflection on the groupwork process through pre- and de-briefing.

This relational, social approach to groupwork is, as far as we are aware, unique in its character. The training for groupwork skills incorporates familiar classrooms games and activities that can be used by the teacher to enhance trust, communication and problem solving skills among the class. These three main skills areas have been identified as crucial for effective groupwork; enabling pupils to engage and support each other's cognitive and affective learning, each to their mutual benefit. As a starting point teachers are advised to begin with using trust games to help children mix with each other regardless of gender, social, ethnic and ability boundaries. By establishing greater trust in the class, pupils are helped to feel more relaxed and positive about trying to work with others. Once the teacher judges a fair degree of trust is present among the class they are encouraged to embark on developing the more complex key skill of communication, in particular, promoting active listening and assertive communication among the pupils. Whilst trust and communication skills need constant reinforcement throughout the school year the teacher can move beyond these activities to a third level of problem solving skills. At this point both the teacher and pupils should feel ready to also incorporate more groupwork into the curriculum.

The second aspect of the project's approach, awareness and constructive reflection, is equally fundamental. Pre- and de-briefing offer the opportunity for the whole class group (pupils and teacher) to reflect on their experiences of working in groups and develop problem strategies for the challenges they encounter. Pre-briefing is carried out before a group activity and here the teacher is able to talk with the whole class about what they are going to do (for example a collaborative painting), how they are going to do it (in pairs) and why (to see how we can help each other develop really imaginative and beautiful pictures). At this point the teacher can also remind pupils of the groupwork skills they need to be mindful of (for example listening to each other and equally contributing). De-briefing occurs after the group activity and as a whole class pupils can share what they have done, the content, as well as how they got with each other in their groups. Through this the teacher is able to help pupils discuss their feelings, problem solve any difficulties they might have experienced and develop possible future strategies to deal with this in future. This whole process is characterised by honesty, transparency and explicitness about working with others – both on the part of the teacher and pupils.

An enthusiastic and highly motivated team of teachers worked with this approach in their classrooms over 4 years. Our collaboration with them replicated the classroom processes we were trying to develop: initial training in using groups was given as well as regular half-day meetings which gave space for teachers to reflect, share together and offer peer support. We see this ongoing supervision and support for teachers as crucial to successful implementation of groupwork with pupils because through our meetings together we were able to support each other in taking risks and trust the new and different relationships that were emerging in the classrooms. As this teacher comments in her personal notes,

The support of meeting other teachers was very important in helping me come this far. I could have easily given up at the early stages without it

Teacher A, year 1 (aged 5–6), personal notes, November 2004

The same acknowledgement is given to the importance of ongoing scaffolding, support and supervision by McWhaw *et al* in their work in this area,

our own experience with training students in how to work collaboratively suggests that though it is helpful, training alone will not ensure a productive or motivating experience for students, especially if training is given as a one-time workshop rather than as a process scaffolded and monitored across a semester (McWhaw *et al*, 2003, p. 78).

Impact on Pupils and Teachers

Its worth the effort...it turns them [the pupils] into a cohesive support group, both academically and socially...You find you have a different relationship with your children.... the activities provided me with a way of building a positive, yet firm relationship with them.

It has changed the way I teach...looking at my journal in the beginning I see how far I have come.

Teacher A, year 1 (aged 5–6), personal notes, November 2004

Reasons for doing it:

There is time to observe children learning because the class is able to sort out their own problems.

We are providing valuable life skills to the children.

Playtimes become a more enjoyable time.

The children grow so much in confidence and feel they can take on anything!

Teacher B, year 3 (aged 7–8), personal notes, November 2004

Its not just sort of delivering the content of a national curriculum, it's a lot more than that and...and sort of quite a sort of nurturing role.... my classroom is a nice place to learn in!

Teacher B, year 3 (aged 7–8), personal notes, November 2004

These reflections illustrate the many positive feelings and experiences of the team of teachers we've been working with on the project. Although pupils were the focus of the intervention programme, it is interesting to note the impact on the professional development of the teachers involved.

Through the training and attention to the processes of groupwork the teachers have reported that they feel as if they really know their pupils as individuals and that they have a much better relationship with their class. It is interesting that at an end of year meeting with teachers, many commented on how the usual task of annual reports was not nearly so difficult as in the past because they had lots to write about each pupil. Further reflection on this led them to conclude that through their deeper conversations and engagement with the class they felt that they really knew the children on a richer and more personal level.

Four key changes are widely reported by all the teachers

1. a change in their relationship with their pupils;
2. a different role in the classroom—as an enabling facilitator, more nurturing rather than simply delivering a curriculum;
3. more reflective in their practice;
4. greater job satisfaction and enjoyment in their work.

In developing pre- and de-briefing in the classroom with their pupils many teachers felt this contributed to more open, deeper and honest relationship with them. Likewise, the training in trust, communication and problem solving skills appears to have extended beyond the pupil group to include the teacher themselves; helping to foster greater trust between teacher and pupil. Similarly, in looking to develop pupil communication through skills such as active listening, assertiveness, 'I' message and positive communication, teachers also developed these skills for themselves as they were encouraged and supported in modelling this with their class.

But what of the pupils? What kind of impact did this groupwork intervention have on them? A greater sense of community, group identity and cohesion has already been identified above, as have improved social skills, greater confidence, self-esteem and capacity to problem solve together. In terms of academic achievement the results and analysis of this data is continuing. Beyond the cognitive to the affective domain, of which the spiritual, social and moral is the focus of this chapter, there would seem to be some significant changes for the pupils both individually and as a group.

Here are some further observations from the teachers;

[a] greater awareness that all their actions have consequences for others brings about a strong sense of group identity and worth.

Teacher A, year 1 (aged 5–6), personal notes, November 2004.

By developing the groupwork skills with the class they soon become a cohesive unit and very nurturing towards others. Even when 'child a' did not want to participate, or became angry and aggressive, the rest of the class 'held it together' and provided positive messages for him. We felt like we were a

family and all took responsibility for what went on in our class room. There were many tears from children, parents and staff when they left the school!

Teacher B, year 3 (aged 7–8), personal notes, November 2004.

These observations reiterate the greater self-esteem, cohesion and group identity developed among pupils engaged in this groupwork approach. Beyond this they also speak of interdependence, mutuality, responsibility for oneself and each other and inclusion. By encouraging broader friendships, greater trust and openness, as well as recognising the different skills that everyone can bring to a group, inclusion in these classes was described as much greater.

Observations on Process and Relationship for Spiritual, Moral and Social Development

The crucial importance of peer group experience for the development of children's co-operative skills, as well as for their social, moral and intellectual development in general, has long been emphasised by prominent developmental theorists...the development of social skills, interpersonal understanding and concern for others continues into adulthood, but the foundation of these critical competencies occurs in the early childhood classroom (Battistich & Watson, 2003, p. 19).

As Battistich and Watson highlight, it has been widely held that peer group experience, or groupwork in classrooms, even with very young children, has the potential to contribute to their social and moral development as well as their intellectual growth. Spiritual, moral and social growth was described at the beginning of this chapter as something inherently human, relational and dialogic that encompasses genuine engagement with the other and community. Here we are in the realms of ontology and issues of ultimate meaning and identity—so how, or why, is this to be found in a greater capacity in our groupwork classrooms? We contend that the answer to this lies in the processes and relationships that are embedded in this groupwork approach.

Unpicking the Process

...reflecting on the problems and successes encountered...maximises children's ability to learn from their experiences, and thus helps to establish their inclination to be lifelong learners and to be personally committed to values of caring, justice and personal responsibility (Watson *et al* as cited in Battistich & Watson, 2003, p. 26).

group processing...has clear academic and social benefits (Gillies, 2003, p. 39).

The overarching process here is the pre- and de-briefing, which allows explicit, open, honest dialogue about the content and process of learning. The honesty and openness is significant and the project has observed how many pupils need time to adjust to the fact that they are not required to 'give the right answer' to the teacher, and others are genuinely interested in listening to their feelings, experiences and ideas. In enabling these conversations the teacher also acknowledges and utilises the affective experience of his/her pupils and recognises it as part of the learning experience. Emotional literacy, affective vocabulary and a holistic sense of an autonomous self is enhanced as pupils are encouraged to become more aware of themselves and others around them. This in turn contributes to the stronger sense of individual and group identity as reported by all teachers on the project, out of which we see the emergence of genuine community where each is responsible for the other as well as oneself.

Once the teacher has the confidence and trust in their pupils to really engage in this process we have seen how the class (teacher and pupils together) becomes a fully human place where learning and building on experience encompasses the whole person, including the spiritual, moral and social.

Re-establishing Relationships

In their work and research in this area Johnson and Johnson observe how classroom relationships can be transformed through children working with others in groups,

children are likely to feel accepted and valued, less anxious and stressed, and willing to reciprocate and help others in turn. Furthermore, as children interact they are more likely to get to know each other as individuals, and this forms the basis for caring and committed relationships (Johnson and Johnson cited in Gillies, 2003, p. 37).

Through our approach to groupwork teachers have described significant changes in the kinds of relationships fostered in the classroom, both between them and the pupils (pupil-teacher) and among the pupils (pupil-pupil). Over the course of an academic year in the classroom together, relationships between pupils are described by teachers as

1. more respectful (for example through listening and responding to each other)
2. more sensitive and aware of each other as individuals, with different skills and personalities
3. more inclusive and accountable to each other (especially with regard to children who might usually be excluded by the peer group)
4. more open and honest.

A similar list could be applied to the nature of the relationship between teacher and pupils. Take, as an example, the reflections of teacher B:

Its also just through the power of the 'I' messages [*communication*] that you're sort of encouraging children to use and you're actually using them with the children, saying 'you've really upset me and made me feel this way because...' and they're sort of really shocked to suddenly see, 'oh, my teacher has feelings too!'...They're just not used to that at all..... I found that really powerful. I think when you suddenly say it...they...look at you as if to say, 'oh my goodness you're real'!

Teacher B, year 3 (aged 7–8), teacher interview, February 2004

When I first joined the project I never thought that becoming a reflective practitioner would be one of the main outcomes. Yet being involved with the project has made me consider my class from many different 'angles'. It has also made me address my teaching style and relationship with the children and adults in my class. I now find myself to be extremely reflective and frequently consider how I can improve things within the learning environment I have created for my class. It is really nice to be able to include the class in any decision making process in the class.

Teacher B, year 3 (aged 7–8), personal notes, November 2004

Teacher B describes the more open and honest communication style in these classrooms between pupil and teacher and this can be seen as the key to understanding the transformed pupil-teacher relationship. In a cyclic response it would seem that through explicit pupil-teacher communication the teacher's sensitivity, respect and inclusion is more overt and available to the pupil. In receiving this message of acceptance, respect and trust clearly and unequivocally pupils are able to trust, value and be open to their teacher. This in turn is fed positively back to the teacher who can build on this further, responding with greater trust and willingness to be open and share themselves with their class. In this way the transformed pupil-teacher relationship begins to emerge.

Contributing to this is the shared nature of power in the classroom. This groupwork approach opts for a more egalitarian framework where power and responsibility for the learning process is shared and supported within the whole class group (teacher and pupils together). For the teacher this means that the challenges of working and learning together are jointly shared alongside the group's achievements. They no longer have to carry the burden and sole responsibility for learning and problem solving every difficulty. Pupils also benefit from genuine ownership and the opportunity to develop problem solving skills, engage with others on affective and cognitive levels and take responsibility for themselves and others in their class group.

It is here, we believe, that we are touching on the spiritual, moral and social self of the teacher as well as the pupils: through this transformed teacher-pupil relationship the teacher, like the pupil, is given permission to bring their affective,

spiritual, moral and social self openly into the classroom. Not only is the teacher as a whole person brought openly to the classroom but, like the pupils, they have space and dialogue to grow and develop. We are speaking here of a relationship that liberates the teacher to become more human in and with their class.

Conclusions and Practical Implications

The task is not to teach children how to be spiritual, still less to indoctrinate. Spirituality in the form of relational consciousness is already there in all children...the teacher's task is much more that of nurturing and protecting the natural inheritance of children and enabling them to reflect upon the implications of the spirituality that is within them.

Above all the privatisation of relational consciousness needs to be counter-acted. Its disappearance into the privacy of the individual psyche means it has the greatest difficulty in being given public articulation. Hence relational consciousness has even more difficulty in entering into the political and social legislation that is necessary if it is to be active in promoting genuine human community...That is why spirituality needs the context of a culture that recognises its importance and allows it to 'come out'. Our task as educators is to reconstruct that culture (Hay, 2001, p. 115f).

Previous research and work by *The Children and Worldviews Project* (see Erricker *et al*, 1997; Erricker and Erricker, 2000; Ota, 1998; 2001) has called for greater attention to the constructs of childhood that are employed in our classrooms and how these limit our appreciation of children's capacity to reflect on and learn from their experiences. Alongside Hay and Nye's relational consciousness understanding of spirituality (Hay, 2001; Hay with Nye, 1998, see), their work also points to a relational, human understanding of spiritual, moral and social growth. The approach to groupwork discussed here recognises the whole self of the child that enters the class each day and does not, as Hay (2001) warns against, seek to indoctrinate or 'teach' spirituality or morality. Instead, through fostering a different kind of learning and relationality among the whole class group, this method presents a practical, social and relational way of addressing social, moral and spiritual development in the classroom. Training activities in key groupwork skills underpin the broader process of open, reflective conversations in pre- and de-briefing. These two inherently practical methods allow for a transformed relationship for both teacher and pupils that engages and enables them to grow.

The role of the teacher is recognised and appreciated as fundamental to the successful implementation of such an approach in the classroom. Crucially, the teachers themselves have to believe in groupwork and be personally motivated to develop and explore it with their class (see Smith, Cowie & Berdondini, 1994, p. 200, 208). Whilst every teacher might use groups these are not always effective and the SPriNG project has demonstrated how training in the complexities of group dynamics and composition can give teachers a deeper understanding of how groups

can be used in their classrooms. Alongside training, ongoing peer support and supervision is essential for long-lasting and real professional development as teachers confront the personal and professional challenges presented to them.

Engaging and developing this style of groupwork is as, our teachers have pointed out to us, a long term investment for the future, but the process and establishment of these deeper, richer relationships takes time, energy and commitment from all involved. With time and greater confidence, the teacher and pupils can create an ethos and relationality that pervades beyond the immediate specifics of working with each other in groups. What we have referred to throughout this chapter as groupwork skills become a broader ethos, embedded in the class and school community, enabling life skills and offering relationships that encourage and develop a way of being a whole person.

This approach to using groups and groupwork with pupils has potential to offer a practical framework that not only enables children take responsibility for their own learning but to also experience and learn from relationships which engage with the education of the whole child. It speaks to their spiritual, moral and social growth as individuals as well as people in relationship and community with others around them.

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INNOVATIVE FACILITATION STRATEGIES FOR RELIGION EDUCATION¹

Cornelia Roux

Faculty of Education, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa

Introduction

Before the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa, minority religions and the belief and value systems of minority groups were largely ignored. Many South Africans believed that the country was predominantly Christian, and this perception was implicitly acknowledged in education without any real attention being given to the creation of policies and practices to accommodate different religions and belief and value systems. The strong Christian National Education character was highly politicised, which further deepened the divisions among the different religious communities, each with its own belief and value systems. One of the main issues was that the different groupings of African Religions (AR) were regarded as being essentially cultural. There was no attempt to recognise AR as being a religion, and it was simply regarded as part of the culture of a certain group of South Africans. Another example is that children classified as 'Indian' were given a separate moral instruction programme called 'Right Living'. This was, however, intended to defuse tensions that existed among Hindu, Muslim and Christian groups of South African citizens of Indian origin (cf. Tait, 1995).

After the 1994 elections there was a subsequent emphasis on the diversity of beliefs and religions in South Africa and on the specific role and function of religion education to meet the realities and challenges of the multicultural, democratic school system and of South African society as a whole. It became obvious that knowledge of the diversity of beliefs and values was a prerequisite for facilitating children within the open school system (Roux, 1997). New strategies were implemented in 1995 to involve children and educators in different projects that would help them

¹In the South African context the term religious education does not exist anymore. Religion education refers to a multireligious approach in the Life Orientation learning area and the subject Religion Studies (Grade 10–12) in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase.

come to grips with the process of change and to introduce responsible citizenship through the understanding of different religions and belief and value systems. In the outline of the South African Outcomes-based education model and curriculum documents (Curriculum 2005, 1997; NCS, 2000; RNCS, 2001) the focus is on life skills that require the mutual transfer of information among cultures, belief systems, values and religions. Knowledge, skills, values and attitudes have been introduced as the main pillars of the school curriculum. The rationale of the learning area Life Orientation emphasises communal values in order to establish understanding, respect and knowledge to promote nation building and democracy. However, the main issue in any transformation process in education is the measure of success achieved in pre-service teachers' training to establish a body of knowledge in practice.

Facilitation Strategies and Approaches Towards Diverse Religions in Pre-Service Student Training Programmes

I would, here, like to highlight the successes of a reflective-dialogical approach with phenomenological notions for pre-service teachers (students in teacher education), describe the mediation process with these pre-service students and offer practical guidelines for presenting games as part of a reflective-dialogical approach with children.

Facilitating a Paradigm Shift and Understanding Terminology

Since 1993 I have carried out a series of research projects in the field of religion in education from a multireligious perspective. The main aim of these research projects was to develop facilitation strategies or teaching approaches that could help pre-service student teachers to cope with the new education system and particularly with a new multireligion programme. Some of these research projects also involved a number of postgraduate students. The first projects (1993 and 1994) focused on children's perceptions of multireligious content with other aspects regarding multireligion education and training to follow (cf. Roux, 1997; Ferguson & Roux, 2003a, 2003b; Roux & Du Preez, 2006). All these projects involved empirical studies and analyses. Some provided guidelines and implementation strategies for religion education programmes in both primary schools and secondary schools as well as for in-service teachers' training at tertiary institutions.

To accomplish the shift from a monoreligious to a multireligious programme is a challenging task in any education system where different belief systems need to be included for the first time. Encouraging students to explore the phenomena of religion may inflict a feeling of disillusionment, especially if they are from an exclusively monoreligious environment. Studying and understanding other religions, emphasising descriptive historical facts rather than spiritual growth and the exploration of a faith by which to live may be part of this disillusionment. Thus, to help

the pre-service student teachers to overcome fears and negative perceptions towards the study of religions other than their own, positive motivation and encouragement are imperative to assist them in making this paradigm shift. It is also important to allow them the opportunity to test their acquired knowledge and skills with regard to interreligious dialogue in a multireligious school.

It is therefore essential to understand the aim and purpose of introducing and implementing a variety of religions in any programme. With this in mind, it is necessary to define the difference between an *interreligious* and a *multireligious* programme in religion education. In the literature (Lohmann & Weisse, 1994; Weisse, 1996a, Weisse, 1996b, Andree, Bakker & Schreiner, 1997; Chidester, Stonier & Tobler, 1999) the terms *interreligious* and *intercultural* are used in an ambivalent way. In Smart's inventory, the various phenomena of religion are separate but are still in relation to each other (cf Omar in Weisse, 1996b). This is for the most part a *multireligious* approach. To study or to learn about religions is not necessarily a subjective exercise, but one that is also knowledge-based. However, if religion education needs to be studied as an integrated system of beliefs, actions and experience, which are defined by it, there needs to be some clarification of the terms. This is only possible if one understands the meaning of the term *interreligious*. But how does one define an integrated system with a difference? Bakker (in Chidester, Stonier & Tobler, 1999) is concerned that educators and researchers are isolating only religious background as a particular variable to understand the notion of *interreligious* and *intercultural*. The organisation and understanding of interreligious education can be the construction of the teacher's own frame of reference with the interpretation of the specific religious content. I would therefore argue that a distinction should be made between the terms *multireligious* and *interreligious*. (cf. Roux, 2007)

The term multireligious describe a programme or approach of learning *about* religions. The approaches can be phenomenological, dialogical or descriptive. The experiential dimension of beliefs and actions in religion is not part of this approach. One can argue that the teacher and/or student should stay mainly in the position of an outsider. On the other hand, an interreligious approach is an integrated dimension where the student's perceptions, experiences and reflections form part of the discussions, and the teacher's methodologies and approaches in the classroom need to reflect the integration of these different variables (as identified by Bakker in Chidester, Stonier & Tobler, 1999). Cultures and religions cannot be in dialogue with one another, but, as Bakker puts it, it is '...only people as individuals who belong to a tradition in a certain way who can, to some extent, talk to one another' (Chidester, Stonier & Tobler, 1999, p. 62).

The Successes of a Reflective-Dialogical Approach

One of the key concerns when dealing with the students from a mono-religious background is which facilitating strategy may benefit them in the process of understanding different religions. I embarked with my students on a *reflective-dialogical*

approach with phenomenological notions, towards gaining knowledge of religions other than their own. Images of religions and basic knowledge were studied by means of lectures, self-study and Web CT (intra-net programmes). As students gained more confidence with their newly acquired knowledge, they had to reflect during the course, on this new knowledge of their own and other religions. Coherence with phenomena of religion other than their own and similar stances were arranged around common human questions, however not before they had gained sufficient knowledge to reflect with confidence. They had to explore overlapping structures, actions, ideas or values from the different religions and belief systems.

However, within such an approach, it was important that their ideas should not only be based on personal perceptions and interpretations of the religions other than their own. The reason was two-fold. Firstly, the students' arguments were to be based on the studied material of the chosen religion(s) and secondly, after understanding the basic concepts through self-study and/or group discussions, the overlapping structures, ideas or values from the different religions and belief systems could be analysed and discussed (cf. Roux, 2007, for a full discussion on this approach).

This approach is defined as a *phenomenological-reflective-dialogical approach*. It seems to be outdated to recall the well-critiqued phenomenological approach towards the understanding of religious content (cf. Jackson, 1997), but it was clear that most students tended to reflect with more confidence once they had gained knowledge of the different religions and worldviews before reflecting on their own experiences and perceptions. The students, in their dialogue about the religions and the studied content, reasoned from a specific frame of reference. The aim was also to minimise a subjective approach towards any religious content, taking the students' own religious background into consideration.

Assertive media reports and remarks about persons from other religious and cultural groups are common. As part of the *reflective-dialogical approach*, students had self-reflection journals (cf. Moon, 1999) with open-ended structures, which gave them the ability to reflect more thoroughly on controversial issues (cf. Roux, 2007). In these journals they could reflect on their own emotions regarding the content, but this was also a process of assessing their knowledge of the different religions and the purpose was mainly to counter personal reflections after having a dialogue with their student colleagues. Students had to re-evaluate their subjective approach in order to re-enter the dialogue process with persons from religions other than their own, or those with different viewpoints. The effectiveness and results of this approach improved when the activity stretched over a period of time. They also had the opportunity to reflect on different emotional issues on religions they had encountered in the printed or visual media. The students seemed to become more media wise as they involved themselves in assessing media reports and conversations with aggressive truth claims. They tended to connect their perceptions with their own frame of reference and were finally able to draw from their own reflective experiences and knowledge.

The Implementation of the above Mentioned Approach in School Practice

The introduction of games in a specific, colour-coded paradigm, as a methodological approach in multireligion programmes, contributes to the success stories of children's knowledge of different belief and value systems. One of the main issues was *feeling safe* with their own religion while gaining knowledge about other religions in order to develop respect for the diversity in their school environment.

Another main outcome of this approach has resulted that children felt secure within their own belief system, gaining knowledge of other religions and understanding the difference. These are the same perceptions and feelings that the students reflected towards the *dialogical-reflective approach* during their training. The professional skills and facilitation strategies of the students and teachers who participated in the project also helped the children to cope with issues that are normally unfamiliar in the Foundation Phase (the Foundation Phase comprises the first four school years in the South African school system: Grade R, Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3. The next phases are the Intermediate Phase and the Senior Phase (Grades 4–9)). In order to facilitate young children in the Foundation and Intermediate Phase to understand different belief systems and religious content, a project, 'Playing games with religion', was initiated in 1999/2000. The main aim of this case study was firstly to create games that will support children in their own religion and belief system, and secondly to help them to understand religions other than their own. The target group was 50 children in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1–3) at former model C schools (former monocultural white schools), where children came from different religious backgrounds and the school community was multireligious in the new dispensation. Three teachers were involved. The research focused on participatory action research guided by theoretical notions with evaluative elements for programme evaluation (cf. McCutcheon, 1999; Whyte, 1991).

Games as a Methodological Approach

Creative teaching and learning are important factors in education. Creative teachers are flexible in applying their methods in order to vary the highly complex situations they meet in the classroom. They have to find innovative ways to introduce new content, especially in emotive subjects. Playing games can be one of the most powerful tools teachers have to facilitate children in mastering new skills, concepts and experiences. It can help children to develop the knowledge they need in order to connect in a meaningful way with diversity in society. Through games they are able to challenge the differences they encounter in the school environment and how they view themselves as individuals. Well-designed games help children to resolve confusing social, emotional and intellectual issues by answering to their own needs and even experience the sense of power of being in control and discovering things on their own or in a group.

The benefits of using games are endless for both individuals and groups. According to Leigh (1999, pp. 4–5) the benefits are the overcoming fear, coping with change and the unfamiliar; trust; counteracting stress; fun/excitement; health; self-esteem; goal setting; showing initiative and achievement and a sense of responsibility. Co-operation; improving communication; risk taking; decision making; problem solving; personal accountability; leadership; negotiation techniques; observation skills; group dynamics and team and commitments. Basic developmental issues were taken into consideration such as the religious perceptions, psychological and social input, as well as the cognitive and emotional developmental aspects in the creation of the games.

Religious Perceptions as Point of Departure

Children's religious perceptions are normally formed within their own social environment, religion and background of their cultural heritage. Perceptions about religion are mainly cognitive in nature and comprise perceptions of, for example, the status of God/a deity, place and day of worship, ways and elements of prayer, rites of passage and celebrating different festivals or performing certain rituals. Religious perceptions do not describe inner feelings or religious experiences, spirituality or issues on religious development. Considering the religious perceptions of children is important when designing games. Two reasons can be given: 1) Children's abilities to understand religious concepts and 2) to counter wrong or negative religious perceptions

Psychological Input

Games are also important for the development of children's emotions. Children need and sometimes use playing alone as their means of taking stock of their own thoughts and their specific emotions. The research undertaken by Roux (1999/2000) showed that when children played the games, they tended to develop a positive attitude towards learning new content and especially understand difficult concepts. Well designed games have the possibility to develop a happy feeling of being good and alive. During game-play children are generally more actively involved and free to enjoy themselves, but they also become aware of some structure or pattern to which they can relate.

Social Input

The social processes of learning from each other, but also understanding normal social skills like teamwork, are vital aspects in education. Children in their first school years need to become conversant with aspects such as the coherence of groups and co-operative learning and social skills to be learned. Parents communicate culture to their children through mediums such as language, play, art and

literature (Piers, 1972). Teachers can use these mediums to facilitate children in understanding social skills. Cultural differences also require participating on an equal basis, especially in a multicultural environment. Children can also improve their language and social skills when playing games together. The coherence in a group during game-play is beneficial to children who have fewer social skills. Generally, it seems that the knowledge and identification of one's own religion and the awareness of other religions may be best demonstrated through playing games.

Emotional Input

Malouff (1998) indicated that games also enhance social and emotional skills. Social-emotional skills include identifying and expressing both one's own emotions and those of others, feeling self-confident, maintaining a positive outlook, setting realistic goals, developing problem-solving skills, coping with adversity and communicating effectively. By using fun-filled games, children can acquire and improve these skills. Games in the sphere of religion, beliefs and values should be designed to be child-oriented. These guide children towards creating answers which help them to make sense of the world around them. By encouraging children to game-play we help them to bring their own life and personal experiences to the game-plan.

Cognitive Input

One of the interesting issues is that one has to ask what are the inputs that game-play can have on a child's cognitive development. I would like to argue that, for a child, inventive game-play is a very important tool when learning how to behave in groups, how to develop skills, how to co-operate and how to handle conflict. Children follow the rules designed by others, for example in board-games, and then create their own rules to think logically and their cognitive ability is tested. They have to explore how to start the games, to organise groups and to interconnect with one another. Piaget (Piers, 1972, p. 27) stated that children should be given the opportunity to experiment and to do research on their own. Their ability to understand the reasons for choosing a specific answer, in games, contributes to their understanding of the content and using their cognition to organise themselves in groups. If games require the use of symbols, letters or numbers, children learn how to develop their own initiative in order to draw themselves into these activities.

Feeling Safe

Feeling safe is one of the most important aspects to be considered when any multireligion content is presented in a classroom. As religion is an emotive topic, it should be clear that in a school environment where different religions are facilitated, reactions and questions should be put across concerning the issue of feeling safe

and secure. One of the major concerns of parents and religious leaders about the facilitation of multireligion content is that children may become confused by the content of the different religions.

Projects undertaken since 1993 (Roux & Steenkamp, 1995) indicated that children are able to recognise differences in religions. The reasons can be that religions are more openly recognisable nowadays and religious communities' festivals are seen more explicitly in communities, in the media and on television. The integration of different cultures and religions in public schools make children more aware of different religions. It is evident therefore, that children have the potential for religious awareness and development. Knowledge of and nurturing in one's own religion are basically the concerns of the parents and the religious community (Roux, 1999). It is therefore the responsibility of religious communities and parents to nurture and educate their children and to encourage in them, feelings of safety.

Methodological Reasons for Feeling Safe

In a project conducted by Roux & Ferguson (2001–2002) entitled *Facilitation strategies of belief and value orientations in a multicultural education system*, games designed for children in the Foundation Phase further sustained the concept of feeling safe in religion education. The following conclusions were made regarding playing games on different religions, beliefs and values:

- Games are fun and create a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. When playing games, the participants focus on the game itself and not on the individuals. The games give children the opportunity to learn about their own and other religions and values in a fun way.
- Games give children the chance to become actively involved and to learn from each other. The colourful and attractive presentations of games stimulate the children's cognitive and emotional development.
- Children want to share their personal knowledge and it is through games that interaction and sharing are stimulated. A new code of understanding develops where they learn from each other and do not feel threatened if they are from a minority or non-religious background therefore games should be educational

Colour-Coding

In the projects (1993; 1994) content, artefacts, puzzles and transparencies of the three Abrahamic religions were put on colour-coded backgrounds. The motivation was that children should recognise the different religions by colour (Roux & Steenkamp, 1995, p. 78). The data indicated that the colour-coding eliminated confusion and that it helped the younger children to understand the multireligion content quite easily. At the beginning of a research conducted in 1993, colours for different religions were chosen randomly. However, in the next phase of the

project in 1994 (*The development and evaluation of multireligion content for pupils in senior school phases*) colours with which the religious leaders and religious community identify, were chosen. The following colours indicated the content or any other artefact of the religion: Judaism: blue, Christianity: purple and Islam: green. In the development of content and visual material on Hinduism and Buddhism, red and orange were used respectively. This approach of colour-coding any religious content was tested at all the different schools and grades involved in the project. Colour-coding was however most successful with the younger children in the Foundation Phase. It was interesting to note that children first identified the colour of their own religion before showing interest in any other religion. In the analysis of these contact sessions, it was important that teachers helped children to identify their own religion first, before embarking on any new content.

During the period 1995–1997, a number of BEd. Foundation and Intermediate Phase students of the University of Stellenbosch in the Western Cape (South Africa) introduced similar contact sessions during their practical sessions with children from different school environments. These students completed the modules in Religious Studies of their four year programme. In the project the content or visual representations of the religion to be discussed were always presented on the colour of the identified religion. The children did not experience any feeling of confusion on the different religion's content. This approach was so successful that African Religions was added to the list. One of the reasons was that more schools were enrolling more children from indigenous religious backgrounds.

Owing to the fact that the colours were recognisable by the majority of the religious community, colour-coding of the main world religions was easy. The different African Religion's communities, however, made the identification of a specific colour very difficult (this was not the case with the other identified religions in the project, due to the fact that, irrespective of different denominations or groupings, the main religious colour could be identified). In order to keep to a more neutral approach *white* was chosen. Although this may not be the perfect way of introducing colour-coding to religious content, teachers and children from these backgrounds tended to be happy with this specific approach. During teachers' in-service training programmes in North West, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape provinces in South Africa, for example, no objective complaints were raised by African Religion's members (Roux, 1997).

The success achieved in combining religion content with a given colour-coded background made it easier to design games within the same paradigm for children in the Foundation Phase so that it is no longer a valid argument to assume that younger children will be confused when multireligious content is introduced. The success with this approach will be outlined in the case study to be discussed. Of particular interest is the way in which the *dialogical reflective approach*, as introduced to the students, is reflected in the discussion of the children. What is more important, in my view, is that the colour-coding effects helped children to identify their own religion and those of other children.

An Outline for Designing Games on Religions and Belief Systems

In the context of the project, *Playing games with religion* (1999–2000), the main aim in designing games with a multireligion content was *to understand my own religion and to learn more about the religions of others*.

In designing new games in religions I identified a number of factors that need to be considered, namely:

- the outcome and educational value of the specific game;
- the different religions or belief systems that need to be covered;
- the children's ability to interact with one another and with the content;
- the children's ages and existing knowledge of their own religion and of other religions; and
- the resources available.

The most important factors are the outcomes and educational value of the game. Understanding the context and grasping the significance of the game can only be achieved when the specific outcomes of the game are clear. One of the main aims of a game is that it must include all the different religions identified in the class or school community. It is, however, important to take the non-religious learner's perceptions into consideration as well. To ensure equality, games must be fair and non-biased towards any religion or belief or value system. Respect for all should always be one of the main outcomes. Interaction between children is very important and therefore these games should be designed for at least two or more players to ensure interaction between children. Such interaction will help children to develop their cognitive, social and emotional skills. In addition, they will learn from each other and develop respect for each other's differences. Apart from the fun it offers, games must also provide children with life skills that will help them to understand and respect diversity.

When designing games, facilitators or teachers need to address relevant issues, thus they must be aware of the children's needs and interests regarding the religious content. The children's age group and existing knowledge must be taken into consideration, since it will determine the level of difficulty of the game. At the same time, games must challenge and stimulate children. Their existing knowledge can also be used as a basis on which to build during the game. Because the effectiveness lies in the outcomes of the game and whether those outcomes can be attained, even the simplest game can be successful.

All the above-mentioned outlines for designing games for religious content are also applicable when designing games for different belief systems and non-religious values. Specific games on values can be very effective in a multireligion programme as well as in important practical life skills programmes. Through games on values, children will come to realise that most belief systems and religions have common values, for example, that one should not steal, one should respect one's parents, one should not kill other people, etc. Owing to the impartiality of the games, non-religious children will also benefit from any game on different values. Many belief

systems have special values and therefore it is important that non-religious children should also have a colour-coding identification. This will help such children to be included in the games and to be respected for their beliefs by their peers.

Case Study

The school was a former model C school, with children from middle to higher income group homes. The language of instruction was English. The children were from multireligious and multicultural environments, however, religion education focused on Christianity only.

Three games were developed: 'Mix 'n Match', 'Snap' and 'Time to Climb'. All these games were played with Grade 2 children and an introductory lesson on the different religions was necessary. The children did not have much previous exposure to or general background knowledge of the various religions that were represented in their school and community.

Playing the Games

In order to ensure that the above-mentioned games would work in a classroom situation they were tested in the Grade 2 class. There were three Muslim children in the class. The other children knew they were Muslim but did not know what it meant to be a Muslim. The Muslim children knew a lot about Christianity. However, neither the Christian nor the Muslim children knew very little about Judaism or Hinduism. As the games were multireligious it was decided to give the children a general introduction on Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism two days before the games were played. These four religions were chosen, as they were the most dominant in their school and community. It would be non-beneficial to the children if they played the games and did not understand what it meant, for example, if they were instructed to 'Move two places forward because David went to the synagogue'. The objective of the lesson was to make children aware of some basic elements regarding the four different religions. These elements were places of worship, holy books, symbols, religious leaders and an important festival. This was done by showing the children simple pictures and keywords. The pictures were pasted on colour-coded cardboard; for example, the church was on purple and the mosque on green cardboard.

Day One

The children sat on the floor. They were asked if anyone knew anything about another religion and whether they could share interesting facts about that religion with the class. This was done in order to see what their existing knowledge was regarding other religions. It was surprising to see how much the children knew and how keen they were to find out about religions other than their own. Some of the Christian

children confused other religions with Christian denominations, for example Catholic and Methodist. The Muslim children were very eager to learn and also to share facts about their own religion such as the clothes they wear when they pray, fasting, in what language the Qur'an is written and how it is read from right to left. One of the Christian boys had previously been at a Jewish nursery school and shared some interesting facts about Judaism. Another boy in the class said he did not have a religion but he *believed in God*. It was interesting to see how eager he was to take part in the discussion. Once the lesson was finished, the pictures and the keywords were placed on a board at the back of the classroom so that the children could refer to them.

Day Two

Without being told to do so, the Muslim children brought various artefacts that had been mentioned in the discussion the previous day. These included a prayer mat, a little Qur'an and some prayer garments. This proves that they were eager to share more about their religion with their friends and that they had at last been given the opportunity to do so. It also links to the concept of feeling safe within their religion and classroom environment. They were secure within their own religion and were open-minded enough to learn about and respect other children's religions and to share elements from their own. It was then decided that the children had enough background knowledge to be introduced to the multireligion games: 'Mix 'n Match', 'Snap' and 'Time to Climb'. SNAP, Time to climb and Mix 'n' Match. The lesson on the following day was allocated for this.

Day Three

As an introduction to the games, the facts that had been discussed on the four religions two days before were revised. The children particularly remembered facts about the religions they had been familiar with. As time was limited, not all the children would get an opportunity to play the games so they were divided into mixed religious groups (e.g. Jewish, Christian and Muslim). The remaining children, who would not get a chance to play, that day returned to their desks and they were given revision worksheets to complete. Their class-teacher, who had learnt more about other religions through the introductory lesson herself, facilitated these children.

Results

In the analyses of the lessons and videotapes the following outcomes were noted:

- Children from religious backgrounds that had, in the past, been marginalised in the religion education classes, made an important contribution to the principle of respecting differences.
- Children from various different religions did not feel threatened while sharing their knowledge and artefacts or while playing the games in the mixed religious groups.

- Children could easily recognise the content of the different religions due to the colour-coding used in the introductory lesson.
- The feeling safe concept was strongly experienced by all the children who took part in the game-play.
- Both the social and the cognitive input of the games were recognisable. However, it would be interesting to study the long-term psychological and emotional input that these games and learning experiences had for the children.

Conclusion

Respect and knowledge for people of different worldviews, irrespective of their cultural and religious backgrounds should be humanly attainable in today's world. I believe that knowledge empowers people to understand differences. Knowledge regarding different religions also gives one the opportunity to understand phenomena such as human behaviour, customs, and rites of passage. The way in which student teachers gained their knowledge on religions, belief systems and values other than their own, empowered them to facilitate their children in a constructive manner. Designing and playing games based on religion, different belief systems and values in education introduces the student-teachers and children to the fun part of learning about oneself and others. I am convinced that the dialogical-reflective approach in their pre-service training helped them to identify with children's possible issues regarding multireligious education. The game-plan of feeling safe was reflected in their knowledge and attitudes of respect.

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ENGAGING CHILDREN IN SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY IN A MULTI-FAITH APPROACH

Jane Erricker, Winchester

Faculty of Education, University of Winchester

Introduction

Spiritual education has often been confused with religious education, partly because it is difficult to imagine the 'spiritual' as distinct and separate from the 'religious'. However nowadays, in state schools in Britain in particular, classes are likely to contain children with a heterogeneous mixture of religious faiths, and the automatic coupling of the spiritual with the religious could be seen as problematic. In this chapter I will show how the work of the Children and Worldview Project (Clive Erricker, Jane Erricker, Cathy Ota) led to the development of methods that could be used for children's spiritual development but do not necessarily form part of religious education. These methods are then open for use with children of all faiths or none.

The Context of the Development of this Method

In the United Kingdom, religious education is mandatory in primary and secondary schools. Although it is not part of the National Curriculum that determines the content and level of other subjects, it is 'an entitlement for all pupils, regardless of their faith or belief' (QCA, 2004).

The nature of religious instruction in British schools was defined historically in the 1944 Education Act which required that all schools (other than independent schools) should provide 'religious instruction'. The 1988 Education Reform Act changed the terminology to religious education (RE) and, within the current non-statutory guidance identifies the importance of RE as 'developing pupils' knowledge

and understanding of, and their ability to respond to, Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.' This guidance also claims that 'RE provides opportunities for spiritual development through helping pupils to consider and respond to questions of meaning and purpose in life, and questions about the nature of values in human society' (QCA, 2000: 17). The specific content of the curriculum in RE is devised by local Education Authorities, who agree on a syllabus. In 2004 the Government published a National Framework to help local authorities in this work. That National Framework says that 'Religious education is intended to make a significant contribution to 'pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and its important role in preparing pupils for life in a diverse society' (QCA, 2004).

So far we can see that there is a certain amount of confusion about what exactly RE is meant to be doing. Is it telling pupils about religions or is it contributing to their spiritual development or is it doing both?

In fact there are almost too many messages about spiritual development in the curriculum. It isn't only in religious education that we are told to address spirituality. The Education Reform Act 1988, the Act that set up the National Curriculum, begins with an overarching aim to 'promote(s) the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and society.' But, as most of us in education in the UK would acknowledge, there are a great many questions that can be posed now, more than fifteen years after the Act, about the degree to which this overarching aim has been addressed. Spiritual and moral education, as a defined aim and as an area of the curriculum, has been debated in conference, pronounced upon by the British government and researched in the intervening years. But academics have not succeeded in defining the terms spirituality or spiritual themselves and teachers have not been helped to decide what they could or should be doing in the classroom. However much is said about religious and spiritual education neither is seen as having significant importance within the curriculum. Spiritual education is not even given specific curriculum time in England and Wales. Yet, along with what is presently known as personal and social education or PSHE, they represent the obvious ways of attending to the development of young people beyond the cognitive domain. In other words they have the potential to help persons develop and grow, rather than just address knowledge and skills related to a body of knowledge. Spiritual education needs to be taken seriously, it can radically reshape our educational vision and practice, and it can have a significant effect on religious and moral education. Importantly, the notion of the spiritual should not be consigned to the margins of educational concern because it has significant implications for political, emotional and values education. It can reshape our educational map and our understanding of how to address the development and growth of young people.

The Children and Worldviews Project investigated children's stories of their lives and their relationships. As we listened to the children's voices we gradually realised that our research method could be the method of spiritual education in a multifaith classroom.

Identity and Narrative

In the project's research we allowed children the time and space to talk through their life experiences, their relationships and their priorities. We felt that the process of talking through their experiences is an essential part of making sense of what happens to them, and that children want and need to tell their stories and to be affirmed and respected. We call this process narrative construction.

We suggest that understanding this process requires an approach which has as its foundation a different understanding both of the nature of knowledge and also of the self who is doing the knowing. These two are very closely related, indeed it is very difficult to discuss one without reference to the other. Our different understanding of knowledge can be described as 'narrative', that is, instead of knowledge being something 'out there' which we can work at understanding, it is conceived of as constructed by us, as a result of the stories we tell ourselves about our experiences. So, it is subjective rather than objective.

Lyotard (1984) makes the distinction between these two types of knowledge when he describes 'scientific' knowledge, as having been privileged in modern culture, and narrative knowledge, which he finds more prevalent in 'primitive' or 'traditional' cultures. This narrative knowledge is communicated within a society by the stories we tell, stories about ourselves and about others, both historical and contemporary. Thus our culture, our identity, what we 'know' and our sense of what is right and what is wrong is constructed by the stories we tell each other. This story telling is put into a political context by Carroll (1987) when, in a commentary on Lyotard he sees 'Lyotard's postmodern disbelief in metanarrative (is) rooted in a confidence in the potential critical force of small narratives' (p. 72). Lyotard also says 'that one can only analyse, respond to, and counter narratives with other narratives' (pp. 76–77) and this suggests that if we accept the idea of narrative knowledge, the only way in which we can 'teach' it is to allow the reciprocal encounter of personal narrative. As Code (1991) suggests, we would like to 'remap the epistemic domain into numerous, fluid conversations' (p. 309).

The process of narration constructs not only knowledge, but also the self that is doing the knowing. When Carol Gilligan develops her notion of the self, based on a critique of Lawrence Kohlberg's view of moral development, she gives us a sense that this process of self construction is ongoing. Her 'self' is attached, relational and subjective, the notion of separation playing a lesser part in the theory. She says 'we know ourselves as separate only insofar as we live in connection with others and that we experience relationships only insofar as we differentiate other from self' (Gilligan, 1982, p. 63).

I would like to suggest that this process of self-construction is an important aspect of spiritual development. It has also been claimed for moral development by Judith Jordan who argues for a new paradigm saying, 'Rather than a study of development as a movement away from and out of relationship, this approach posits growth through and toward relationship' (Jordan, 1991, quoted in Hekman 1995, p. 74).

Susan Hekman (1995) develops the idea of a relational self and articulates her own notion of the 'discursive self'. She analyses the movement in contemporary

moral theory from the modernist position defined by Descartes, an autonomous ego with essential qualities divorced from contingent circumstances, to a constructed, embodied self defined by Marx as historically situated and by Freud as sexed (p. 72). She notes that more radical steps were taken by object-relations theorists, who 'seek to describe a self that has no separate, essential core but, rather, becomes a 'self' through relations with others' (p. 73). In other words, I understand myself as a self because of the way I behave with and to others and the way in which others behave to me.

Now there is a huge difference between persons who believe themselves to stand alone, their selfhood all their own, distinct, protected and controlled by that individual and the person whose selfhood depends upon relationship with others. In the latter case, people need relationships, depend upon them for their selfhood. Their selfhood is not entirely in their own control, their positions are more insecure. It is also possible that their selfhood is more contingent, likely to be changed and dependent on circumstance. It sounds more risky to be that sort of person.

Susan Hekman identifies the relational self as the 'product of discourses' and goes on to articulate a concept of the subject/self which she calls the 'discursive subject'. Its

... identity is (not) disembodied, given, transcendent. It is (not) what the subject 'discovers' as he 'finds' himself. For the discursive subject, by contrast, identity is constituted, multiple, and fluctuating. The subject is a work of art, fashioned from the discursive tools at the disposal of the situated subject (1995, p. 109).

We take this to mean that the nature of a discursive identity depends upon the nature of the discourse. In other words who you are, your 'self', depends on what happens to you, who you talk to and how you talk. My argument is that the discourse (narrative) is essential to the process. The talking out loud, the communication with another, is essential to the process of construction. The use of language in the dialogic process constructs the self and because of this the self is necessarily fluid, changing, contingent, responsive. The self constantly changes, and changes in dialogue and because of dialogue, and this process is unavoidable and necessary. The self is a 'work of art' because it is constructed, partly by the 'artist' and partly by the contingency of experience.

Thus by offering children the opportunity to tell their stories or 'narrate', we are allowing them to construct their identities, within the context of their relationships and connections with each other, their families, their environment, and if necessary, their religion. The construction of this self in relationship and by means of narrative is spiritual development, and allowing the process to occur is spiritual education.

The Children and Worldviews Project team, Jane Erricker, Clive Erricker and Cathy Ota, found, in their work having conversations with children aged between six and eleven, that when the children talk they express their spirituality, work out their moral positions and opinions and develop their emotional skills. This process can be detected in their stories. There is no need to question the children closely for

them to demonstrate these things; all that is needed is space, a stimulus to start the process and a display of interest and encouragement. Using this process is not about trying to find things out about the children. This process belongs to the children themselves and they must be allowed to construct their stories as they wish. The researcher does not need to be too concerned with whether they are telling the 'truth'. It was found that children respond to this kind of work best if they are allowed to work in groups. If they talk in groups the other children will respond and it is the discussion that is valuable. When this discussion takes place in school then of course there are issues of disclosure. When the researchers did this work as research and when teachers followed this method then they simply followed normal school procedures if the children revealed abuse of any kind.

The research team were impressed by the maturity and competence with which children deal with difficult experiences such as family breakdown, death, violence and racism but even children whose lives have been comparatively calm still need to talk. The children showed that they can help and support each other and that they do not necessarily need adult intervention to solve their 'problems'. What they do need is space in a crowded school curriculum to tell their stories and to have them sympathetically and uncritically received. There is often nowhere else and no-one else to listen to them. The children will develop their listening skills as well as their narrating skills as they listen to each other's stories and tell their own.

I will now describe some techniques we have used to start conversations with the children, and suggest how they can be used in the classroom. Note how none of these techniques is overtly religious, yet none exclude the religious as it is part of a child's experience or thought.

1. Concept Mapping: A Starting Point for Narration

Concept mapping is a technique developed by Novak and Gowin in their 1984 book *Learning How to Learn*, and which was originally intended for use in concrete curriculum learning situations, such as science education. We have adapted and extended the technique for use in spiritual and moral education (Erricker, et al., 1997). It is a way of expressing an understanding of a particular concept, which relies on the fact that we understand a concept according to its relationship with other concepts. When we meet a new concept we place it into a web of other concepts; in other words we embed a new concept in other concepts, depending on the perceived relationship of that new concept to other already known concepts. Concept mapping allows us to express this understanding by actually verbalising the propositions which link one concept with another and placing them on a diagram.

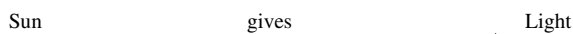
The maps thus produced have been used as a device for assessing cognitive learning, and as a creative device for generating new connections and expanding a learner's understanding of a particular concept. It can be used to identify misconceptions and thus to assess learning both before and after a particular teaching session or a whole course.

However we have found that the technique can also be used to express more affective understanding, depending on the concepts that the learner is asked to

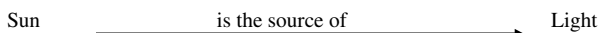
map. Thus, using concepts like loss, friendship, joy or beauty can give us insight into someone's personal experience and their interpretation of that experience. The narrating of the links as well as the writing of them can be used to reflect on that experience.

There are two ways to start someone concept mapping. You can either provide the child with a list of concepts that you want included in the map, or you can give them the topic and ask to make their own list as they go along. Children usually need time and practice to develop the skills of concept mapping and I have found that giving them a list of concepts is the best way to begin. The children can be asked to choose one concept and write it in the middle of a large sheet of paper. Then they should choose another concept and write it close by, joining the two concepts with a line and writing on that line indicating what they understand to be the connection between the two concepts.

For example one concept could be *sun* and the other *light*. They could be connected like this:

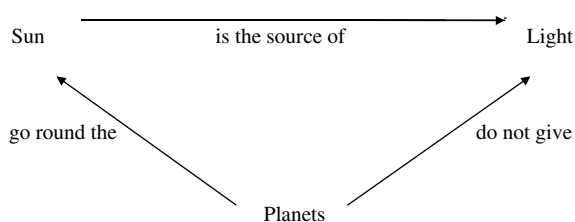


Or like this:



Note that the connection is an arrow in the direction in which the proposition should be read.

From this point on other concepts can be written around the initial ones and connecting lines drawn wherever necessary.



The directional arrows are very important. For instance, the planets-sun connection is factually correct in one direction and not in the other. The final map can be quite complicated and difficult to read so it is often a good idea to get a child to talk about his or her map and explain the connections. Children should be allowed to cross out any offered concepts which they don't understand, and add any they feel have been left out of the list and they can redraw their maps to make them

neater and clearer. Children get better at concept mapping with practice but very young children can do maps orally and as a whole class, with the teacher scribing at the front.

If you are just looking for children's factual conceptions and misconceptions then interpreting these maps is very easy. However sometimes when you think you are asking for a 'factual' map you get something more interesting. In a concept map on Earth and Space constructed by a seven year old girl sky and clouds are connected by a statement that 'the sky gives a place for the clouds to play' and earth and day by 'the earth gives a place for the day to live.' It is clear that she does not have much 'scientific' knowledge of the topic and her ideas imbue the contents of the universe with human feelings and desires. Her propositions are poetic and begin to construct the biographies of the elements she has mapped. Her map is not continuous, but is separated into discrete sections, leaving loose ends, indicating that she does not understand the connections between all the concepts, but this doesn't appear to be a problem and she doesn't try to pull them all together.

This child was taught about Earth and Space a few months after constructing this map, and shortly after that, constructed a second map so that her learning could be assessed. In her second map, very different from the first one, the shape is almost a closed circle, with no loose ends. The subject is 'wrapped up', she knows about it now. The map displays more scientific knowledge, but also some misconceptions that she has gained. The poetic language and the anthropomorphism is gone and it is difficult not to feel that something has been lost in the transition between not knowing and knowing about Earth and Space. However, we must not be too hasty. Maybe she has only learned that the appropriate place for poetic language is not in a science task. It would take more conversation to determine exactly what has happened to her thinking but the concept maps have told us quite a lot. These concept maps represent a way of narrating in themselves, but also a starting point for narration.

2. *Goodbye Joe: Practice in Narration About Death*

Helping children come to terms with death is increasingly difficult in a secular and stressful age. The following activity carried out by Clive Erricker in schools (Erricker & Erricker C. and Erricker J., 2000) provides a comparatively safe and emotionally secure scenario in which children can explore their feelings about loss. As with all our activities, it is a starting point for the narration of personal biography, and should be allowed to go in that direction if the children want it to.

It is said that experiencing the death of someone close to you leaves you never the same again, and a sharing occurs between those who have been through this, even though these experiences occur quite separately. However, there is also often a lingering feeling that you never said goodbye properly and that when the moment occurred you were quite unable, in the sudden impact of the event, to know how to say goodbye. The rite, burial or cremation, is left to the professionals and has no power because it does not engage with the physical fact of the dead person and the sense of loss is present but not expressed. It may seem rather morbid to ask

children to consider their own mortality, but as with all existential issues, it lies at the heart of religious, personal and social and spiritual and moral education.

The following activity is a way of starting to explore these issues:

Children should go out into the school field and find something that was living but now is dead, for example a leaf, a piece of paper, a piece of wood from a tree, a shrivelled apple, a dead insect. They decide which object is the best thing they have found and write a story or a poem about their life as a leaf or apple or piece of wood. The stories about their life as the object are shared and the most important feature of this part of the activity is the children's listening. If each pupil is listened to well, they realise a need to talk about their story as best they can. They are then asked to create a ceremony that reflects the qualities of the life of their object as a way of saying goodbye to it.

This is an example of a ceremony that the children performed for a dead leaf that they called Joe. The class sat in a circle and the children in the group carried the leaf round the class in an open box three times. The first time the group were asked to blow on it to remind ourselves of the wind in Spring blowing and helping it to grow. The second time they poured a little libation of water on the leaf. The third time they simply said goodbye in whatever way they decided was appropriate. At the end there was a rocking ceremony to represent the wind blowing and the branches swaying. They passed by the open box with the water and the leaf in it, in turn blowing on the water and leaf as two of the group rocked it to and fro.

After the ceremony there was discussion about what had been most effective and what should now be done with the objects. The stories and ceremonies had opened up the relationships with the things that had been found that represented the passing of living things into death and the children had tried to develop respect for these living things that had died. It was agreed that a tree in the grounds was an appropriate place to bury the objects. The children buried them and found that it was important to be able to identify exactly where each object was buried, so they found a means to mark each spot. Afterwards there was a discussion about how they would feel if the place was dug up to make a football pitch or a car park, or if other children trampled on it. It was now a different, more significant space. The children decided to let the rest of the school know, in an assembly, that this place needed to be respected in a new way.

3. *Temple Bells: Using an Interactive Story*

Our education system has long favoured the idea that learning is a rational activity and that knowing is being informed about a world 'out there', whether in the past or the present. If we try understanding things differently we might say that learning starts and ends with understanding ourselves and others in a relational way and that this is to do with the mind. The mind has two aspects that are not entirely distinct from one another: the rational and the emotional. Therefore, we can speak of rational and emotional intelligence, or perhaps spirituality. How do we get in touch

with these, develop them and bring them together? The answer is that imagination or imaging is a vehicle for doing this. This puts imagination at the centre of the educating process and, in the sense that we normally use the terms, suggests that we must get in touch with our hearts as well as our minds to do this.

We need to encourage reflection on the way in which we all, unconsciously, use story, symbol and ritual in our own lives, whatever age we are. Once we start to do this we shall begin to understand how others do it in their spiritual and religious lives. The process does not change, the elements are the same, only the literal things; the actual stories, things, actions are different. The aim is to see beyond the literal world of things or appearances as they present themselves to us and *see* how these are an expression of a making sense of the world.

Here is one example of a method that can be used to achieve what is described above. The important thing is that the learning is active, by which I mean not just that the listener should be doing things in a literal sense, but that the telling engages the mind of the listener. It must involve creating story, symbol and ritual in a way that relates to our experience.

The aim of the activity is to tell a story in such a way that it moves from the teller (the teacher) to the listeners, so that they can then be the storytellers. Clive Erricker (Erricker & Erricker, 2000) has used a story from Anthony de Mello's (1982) book *The Song of the Bird* where he tells of a young boy searching for a temple with a thousand bells which had been destroyed by a huge wave and carried to the bottom of the sea. He searches long and hard and eventually finds the place, but whether he hears the bells or not is down to the storyteller.

After telling the story the listeners can be asked to close their eyes and go back through the story in their mind and choose their favourite moment. Then put their hands out palms up next to one another and transfer their favourite moment from their mind into their hands and close them together. Then they should turn to the person next to them and tell them what they have in their hands and why. They can discuss their conversations with the whole class, if they wish, and explain why they chose the moment they did.

When telling the story, moments can be introduced at which everyone stops and listens and sees images in the story with closed eyes; in other words, use the story as a form of meditation. The purpose of the ritual and sharing, at the end, is to transfer the story to the listeners and encourage them to link it with their own experiences and reflections. This can then lead into further expressive and creative activities. The important thing is, of course, not the particular story, nor the specific activities, but the process employed, and adapting the content and the process to the age of the group and the curriculum.

4. *Using Children's Stories*

The stories presented below are ones that the Children and Worldviews Project researchers, or their collaborating teachers, collected from the children who had spoken with them (Erricker C., et al., 1997; Erricker C. & Erricker J.,

2000; www.cwvp.com). We called the process of collecting the stories 'conversations' or 'interviews'. When the interviews had been transcribed the interviewer's contribution was removed, and this left a continuous piece of prose which we called the child's story. We have used these stories as stimuli to help people to start talking about their own experiences, and the process has been successful for adults and for children. It is interesting that we have found that the age of the person telling the original story is immaterial, and that others respond to the affective message in the story, rather than to the way in which it is told. It is also interesting that the response is not necessarily to the overt message of the story, but to an underlying concept that resonates with the experience of the listener. So, for example, a discussion about family breakdown between two ten year old boys was produced in response to a seven year old girl's story about her grandmother dying. The boys were responding to the underlying concept of loss, and interpreting it and responding to its articulation with a resonating story about their loss, the loss of their father or mother through the family dislocation, and the loss of their family structure.

The themes of the stories varied according to whatever was uppermost in the child's mind at the time of the conversation, so that there were stories about death, separation, racism, bullying, religion, pets, family relationships, school and special places. The researchers talked to the children in school, and the conversations either began with a poem, or a fictional story, or with a general inquiry about the children's school and home life. The children were always spoken to in groups, usually about four children, though sometimes there were as few as two if the children wanted it. The best conversations were between the children, rather than between the adult researcher and the child. The conversations were tape recorded and transcribed afterwards, and the researcher's comments taken out. What was left was a child's narrative, a story that they wanted to tell about their experiences and feelings. These narratives have in their turn been used as stimuli for other children to respond to and some of the stories below are these second generation narratives. The stories can be given to the children to read for themselves, or they can be read out in class by the teacher or a child.

When the children raise an issue, they should be allowed to talk freely about their own experiences and how they feel about them even if they appear to be going off the point. The most valuable reflections often come unexpectedly. The teacher should try not to jump in with judgements about their expressed positions, but allow the children to express themselves fully, to explain their positions, and to be challenged by other children before being challenged by the teacher. Discussion between the children is much better for their development than a conversation between teacher and pupil.

The following stories all raise several separate issues. The whole story doesn't have to be used each time and only sections of each story appear here. Small portions can be read and the issues isolated for discussion. The children can be asked if there is any thing they would like to say to the narrator and their responses can be allowed to determine the direction of the discussion.

Veronica's Story: A Story About Family, Death and Heaven

I think that in heaven you can ride a white pony and have marshmallows. Before my Nan died she told me lots of things because she knew she was going to die and she told me all about the things she was going to do and she said she was going to send me a postcard.

She said she would be happy and she wanted me to be happy when she died. On that day she got a picture of her and all the family, stuck it on a postcard and wrote on the back, 'I'll see you in your heart'. Now she's always with me. Now I talk to her all the time. I talk to her when I'm lonely. When I've argued with my friends I go and sit on the wall and think about her and talk to her. When I get fed up I sit there and talk to her about my friends. She tells me that she's riding on things. She says she's having a really nice time. She says she's going to ring me up. She says things in my head, she rings up my brain and talks to me. When she went up in heaven she took one of her special secrets. She took it with her and she can just ring me up, it's clever. This special secret makes her able to do that.

I keep on wanting to tell people things but they don't understand. I know everyone's in heaven who has died. Grandma tells me. She works in a cleaners. She washes all the clouds in heaven. She's got lots and lots of friends in heaven. She hopes we'll stay alive a long time but she wants me to go up there to see her. I'd like to go and see her but if you go up there you've got to stay there. You can't go unless you've died. Heaven is high, high in the sky, it's higher than space.

Activity: Using Veronica's Story

Issues raised from this story include:

- Family relationships
- Death and its rituals
- The afterlife
- Ideas about heaven
- Relationships with friends
- The environment
- The nature of God
- Loneliness

Emma's Story: A Story About Violence, Family Separation, Religion and Pets

I'm nine years old and I was born in Birmingham. I like living here in Southampton, it's better than Birmingham. I've got a lot of friends here. When we lived in Redditch I had tons of friends but they used to play with knives, that's why my Mum moved, 'cause it was very violent.

My sister, Donna, is sixteen and goes to college. I've got two Dads 'cause the one up in Redditch had an argument with my Mum. He said that she had to go, so my Mum just grabbed any clothes and me and we zoomed down. She took me first and then she had to get Donna. Now I've got this Dad down here and they're married, he's better than my other Dad.

I used to run off, I used to go to my friends a couple of roads back and sleep there for a couple of days. My Mum used to come down and fetch me in about a week when everything was over. My sister used to go to her friends as well to get away from the arguments.

Things were much more different when we got down here, but once or twice my Uncle got drunk. He got drunk once and he smashed a door and he smashed the window. He was going to hit my Mum down the stairs and when he got close up, I put my fist up and went like that and he backed off, he was scared. That was about a week ago I'd say, he gets drunk a lot, every two weeks. When my Dad's there he tells my Uncle to leave the children alone and go to bed and then he pushes him up the stairs. My Uncle is younger than my Dad, he's been my Uncle for a couple of years, he's related to my old Dad, but my old Dad didn't like him. My new Dad down here likes him. When my Dad gets paid he just gets a little bit tipsy and he bangs around upstairs so I can't get to sleep!

Donna calls my Dad here, John, she don't call him Dad 'cause she still thinks of that other one I got as Dad, but I call him Dad. She likes my other Dad but I don't like him. Both my Dads get drunk a lot but my old Dad used to slam the doors and smash the windows and when my Mum was trying to get Donna back, the stupid thing he done, he took an overdose and he got my sister really het up. She doesn't want to live with my old Dad now.

I used to live near Church Street, there was a park down there and you always get all the bullies down there. But there's not really a lot of bullying, not round this area or this school. In the other school I used to go to there was all quite a lot of bullying.

We've got a book where you show your hand and read it. I can read my hand, I'm definitely going to live for quite a long time 'cause I've got a strong line. I'm going to have four children 'cause if you look there's four lines going down my hand. I'm not going to get married 'cause it says there. You can still get a man and have kids you know, I just won't get married. It wouldn't matter to my Mum.

My parents don't want me to marry an Indian boy, they want me to marry a white boy, we know which one, Sam Gibbs, he lives in Church Street. He's strong, when you see him, you wouldn't have a fight with him.

Activity: Using Emma's Story

Issues raised from this story include:

- Family separation
- Family violence
- Family relationships
- Extended families
- Going to Church
- Being Christian
- Pets
- Superstition
- Liking or not liking where you live
- Getting married

Andrew's Story: A Story About God, Heaven and the Environment

I think God's up in heaven, just above the galaxy I suppose, you go into space and God's above space. I think it's just like fields of countryside rather than cities and towns with pollution and things like that, like the opposite to pollution really.

When you're in heaven maybe you can spend more time with your hamster. I like doing that after school, and like all the time it's free and you can do what you like. I think it's just really free.

Maybe God is in the heart of living people and heaven is just ruled by God, he's not actually there.

I reckon if you're good you go up to heaven and if you don't you go down. I think you learn about God in your life so you practise everything and the reason for that is for when you go to heaven.

Really from going to school, going to this school really, it's taught me that there is a God. We've been doing wind and fire and as our homework we had to draw a personification of wind and fire, so that's really saying like that's a picture of God. I do think of God like an old man as well.

If I could ask God three questions I would ask him what are you like? What do you look like? And why did you create us?

Activity: Using Andrew's Story

Issues raised from this story include:

- The nature and identity of God
- Heaven
- Pollution
- Relationships with pets
- Where do pets go when they die
- Questions to ask God

Rita and Harpreet's Story: A Story About Racism and Being an Immigrant

Do you know what else is wrong in the world? People calling other people names. Like English people calling us Paki's and that. That should be changed. People do that to us sometimes, like a gang from the National Front will go up to people.

They try to get us out of the city, they think this isn't our city, but do you know, India isn't our city either.

It's because of our skin, like we're black and all that, dark brown and like they're a bit white and pink, that's why. I think the only thing to do is just be friends and all that.

Or maybe you should stay away from them, but if you stay away then you still meet them again. If you stay away from them they might think 'why are you staying away?' and they might concentrate on you even more.

Activity: Using Rita and Harpreet's Story

Issues raised from this story include:

- Being immigrants
- Racism
- Being different
- The National Front
- Bullying

Conclusion

The activities suggested above are all ways of facilitating children's reflection on their lives, allowing them to construct who they are and what they feel about the issues they and their friends have to confront. I feel, and the other members of the Children and Worldviews project feel, that the time, space, and permission to do this is what children need to be granted in order to develop spiritually. Others reading this might feel that these children are actually developing morally, or emotionally, or might even call this citizenship education. We can encompass all of these within what we would like to call spiritual education.

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CREATIVE AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION IN THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Maria da Conceição Azevedo¹ and Helena Gil da Costa²

¹ *Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Portugal*

² *Universidade Católica, Portugal*

Main Concepts

Education

Any proposal on Education must consider the way in which this concept has changed throughout the twentieth century where Education is no longer understood as a preparation for life that occurs completely and definitely in childhood and adolescence.

The UNESCO Conferences on adult education defined Education as a continuous process, from birth to death, whose intrinsic purpose is to bestow on each person the means that enables him/her to become more and more autonomous, that is to say, to satisfy their needs and aspirations up to the maximum of their possibilities, as an individual, but also as a member of society. A similar point of view has been presented by the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning: 'The objectives of youth and adult education, viewed as a lifelong process, are to develop the autonomy and the sense of responsibility of people and communities, to reinforce the capacity to deal with the transformations taking place in the economy, in culture and in society as a whole, and to promote coexistence, tolerance and the informed and creative participation of citizens in their communities, in short to enable people and communities to take control of their destiny and society in order to face the challenges ahead. It is essential that approaches to adult learning be based on people's own heritage, culture, values and prior experiences and that the diverse ways in which these approaches are implemented enable and encourage every citizen to be actively involved and to have a voice' (<http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/confintea/declaeng.htm>, 2003).

As Paulo Freire has stressed, both in his theory and practice, no one can assume, in exclusive terms, the function of an educator, thinking that he/she has nothing

else to learn, just as no one has the exclusive condition of a student. The ability to educate ourselves reciprocally depends, according to Freire, on *conscientisation*, that is to say, on the ability each one of us has to read ourselves and to read the world, on our ability of confronting ourselves both as a being and as a project, in relation to other people, to the world and to God—whatever idea one may have of God.

In accordance with Freire (1997), Education is a process in which every individual involved (educators/students) is an ‘uncompleted’ being. Even if this idea is beyond both a sociological and psychological perspective, Freire overtakes factual analysis. He makes a philosophical statement which sets a postulate of metaphysical nature, assuming that separation from nature is inherent to being human (from the breaking of the original bonds that connect the human baby to his mother, to the physical and social environment). However, this situation is not definitive at the moment of birth. On the contrary, it is progressive and concomitant to the process of physical and psychological maturation, to the process of autonomisation. Separation gives way to new relations that, on the one hand, settle answers to adaptation problems that come up (culture transmission) and, on the other hand, are proportionate to the emergence of new ways of questioning the world (uniqueness of the person and a person’s conscience).

The way we understand Education and the imperfection of the human being, in accordance with Paulo Freire and others, led us to reflection on Spirituality (and spiritual education) and Creativity which was a logical follow on. This is closely related to our way of understanding Human Development.

Spirituality

The concept of *spirituality* seems to be ambiguous. In fact, different cultures and religions define it according to their own specificities, and sometimes there even exists some confusion between the concepts of spirituality, wisdom, culture, faith and religion. The meaning of spiritual education will differ according to how we define *spirituality*, and also on the type of psychological, sociological, philosophical or other kinds of approaches adopted (Carr, 1996). In this chaos, Trousdale (2004) distinguishes two fundamental meanings of the term *spirituality*: ‘a search of God’, or a ‘God-directed focus’, and a naturalistic way of relating with the world.

In a pedagogical context, as we deal with children or adults with different ideas and beliefs, a definition that can be related to both perspectives is needed. Trousdale’s considers that spirituality comes from the answers each culture—and each person—can find when asking the same questions our ancestors have asked: ‘Who am I? Is there a power beyond what I see, and if so, what is it like? What is my relationship with others and with creation to be?’

From a strictly anthropological approach, leaving out any theological considerations, we have tried to construct a definition of *spirituality* by collecting the most relevant elements from different existing traditions and perspectives:

A situated perception, emerging out of the onto-teleological basis of the human being, that becomes conscious and is dynamically translated into one's fulfilment and understanding of both, other people and the world, as well as in the acceptance of the Transcendent.

This definition is related to what other authors call *faith*, not as worship or tradition but as an act of the whole personality: 'trust and loyalty to what a person or community accepts as an ultimate centre of value' (Niebuhr, 1985) or 'what concerns people ultimately (...) that to which they direct their lives and that from which they expect fulfilment' (Paul Tillich, 1957; Fernhout, 1989: 188), or 'an engagement with the meaning of one's life' (Webster, 2004: 7).

It also presupposes some attributes (similar to what Webster (2004) states on the existential framework of spirituality):

- Inwardness, that is an 'awareness on the part of the individual that one's existence is in one's thinking and that this thinking only belongs to oneself';
- Relation, that is, spirituality doesn't aim at the investigation of the existence of beings, deities, ideas or beliefs, but rather to *how* the individual *relates* to them;
- Balance between freedom of choice and culture, that is, the individual is able to find and choose his own answers to the fundamental questions on the meaning of existence, but 'that personal *inner* truth' doesn't exist in a detached way from the world; it is historically and culturally embedded);
- Holistic perspective (one's spirituality 'involves the commitment of one's whole being', that is to say, it incorporates not only 'intellectual knowing', but also emotions, intentions and actions).

Creativity

Using Graciela Aldana's definition and some of her proposed reflections (1996), we understand creativity as a special way of thinking, feeling and acting that leads to a result or an aesthetic functional and original product, both for the individual and for the social group s/he belongs to.

The first generation researchers approached creativity in a psychological perspective: demystifying it (given that it was viewed as connected to arts, scientific invention or geniality), and using it in the area of education, business and daily life. Authors like Guilford and Torrance emphasised the research of creative thought, with the intent of understanding its components and creating a set of tools and methodological strategies that could assess and stimulate it.

The second generation developed a more pragmatic perspective—the search for effectiveness in the distinct spheres of daily life through the use of a series of proceedings, tools and techniques that, as strategies of the right hemisphere, try to

create truly original solutions. Both perspectives converge on the need to change the way that problems are faced: problems are not tragedies but challenges and opportunities for finding unknown abilities and solutions.

Finally, in a cumulative sequence, we reach the third generation, Creative Living. For this third generation it is not enough to stimulate the competences of creative thought once the tools and techniques only gain effectiveness when they are incorporated by whoever uses them.

In this context, creativity demands three essential conditions:

1. Sensitive knowledge of reality, the standpoint of all creative processes that are translated into the use of the wealth of our senses, the ability of listening to our intuitions, fears, feelings and thoughts, seeking to eliminate each and every stereotype.
2. Commitment to the action, that is, the need of having some level of transformation of reality at the point of arrival, in search for an improvement of the person's situation, so that alternative solutions are evaluated according to this criteria and concrete steps are taken towards the effective positive transformation of reality.
3. Solidarity, recognising the person as a being-with-others implicates the knowledge, the imagination and the assessment in a way of facing the great evils of humanity.

Thus, it is by the confluence of the contributions of these three generations and by the assumption of our historical responsibility that today we try to reach a new way of thinking-feeling-acting, which come from the essences of the human being and may originate a new way of socialising, of making life, of being humans.

Human Development

The first studies on human development embracing a person's whole life were conducted in the United States with the purpose of following children identified as being particularly intelligent, for instance, Terman's studies of Stanford's gifted children that began in 1921 and followed the children into their old age (see Papalia, et al., 1999).

Effectively, human growth and development, although being more evident in childhood, continue through life, and a number of sciences (psychology, sociology, biology, genetics anthropology history, medicine, etc) contribute to an understanding of its process. While these contributions cannot be added up, they may be integrated in a systemic way (Papalia, et al., 1999).

As a constant transformation, unpredictable and unfinished becoming (which incorporates the observation of phenomena itself), human development is against the

idea of unfolding, updating or the repeating of any model built or designed before, in biological and psychological and cultural terms. It also implicates an ecological perspective, as explained by Bronfenbrenner (1979): ecological environment of human development cannot be understood only as the immediate context in which the child lives; it refers to the totality of the complexity and to its setting in the sphere of nature including the dialectic individual-society and nature-culture. Therefore, human development is understood as being a mutual and progressive interaction between, on the one hand, an active individual having a growth dynamic and, on the other, the immediate means in which the some individual lives, whose properties are in permanent transformation. The relations established between the most immediate contexts and the wider systems, in which they are integrated, in turn, influence this process. For that reason, the explorations on human development phenomena implicate multiple causal interconnections and not only linear causal relations.

In what concerns the individual, we also consider that human development has to be understood as a whole, that is to say, involving systemically the dimensions of corporeity, affectivity and cognition.

Another consequence of the unpredictability and imperfection of the human being mentioned before is the autonomy as human ability to spontaneously create meanings to order action and to create the conditions of development (by the shape of meanings that occur in the context of a common language, the meaning of development also becomes communitarian).

In short, we propose the following definition built from the contributions of Damásio (1994; 1999), Feitosa (1993), Fonseca (1995; 1998) and others:

Continuous and unpredictable process of construction of the human being as a species and as an individual, that occurs in the interaction of progressively wider contexts, relating to the complex totality that is expressed as corporeity, affectivity and cognition and involving as a constituent the praxis oriented by meanings that command their actions that can be shared and create a community meaning.

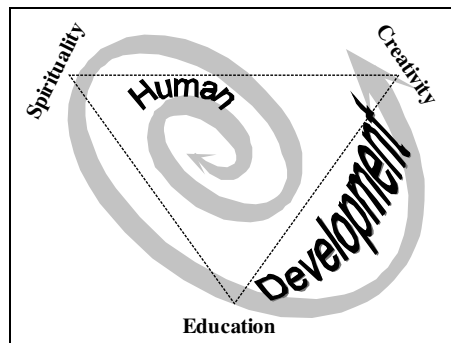


Figure 1. Concepts interrelation

Concepts Interrelation

Education, as we defined it above, demands that we speak about human development embracing the course of life, from the moment of conception to the moment of death. It gives rise to the birth of spirituality and creativity. In its radical meaning, education is a spiritual and a creative process which assures awareness and personal appropriation:

- when we are aware of the self (our present) and accepting the risk, we recreate our own existence to get to the project of 'being more' (our possibility)
- 'It is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self' (Winnicott, 1980).

By considering the concepts defined above and their mutual relations, we perceive in all of them:

- a dynamic nature;
- an attention to the aims, that is to say to the sense of human activity;
- a lasting relationship between being and knowing,
- a 'concrete universality', that is to say, the confrontation with the whole human experience throughout the concrete experience of each person and of each culture.

Educational Strategies and Approaches

The concepts we just presented bring us back to Freire's perspective on the teacher's function: the teacher is not someone whose function is only to *teach*; that is to say, someone who transmits knowledge that other people are supposed to learn. The teacher must be someone who 'creates conditions for the development of the capacities of human beings who are on the way to their fulfilment as persons, citizens and professionals' (cited in Dias, 1997). In other words, every teacher is an educator.

Once again according to Freire, the pedagogue is defined as someone that has and tries to develop the following professional qualities:

- Permanent research and strictness;
- Methodical strictness;
- Respect for previous knowledge;
- Incentive to critical conscience;
- Ethical formation;
- Aesthetical formation;
- Acknowledgement of emotion;
- Intuition;
- Methodical analysis.

These professional qualities cannot be separated from the personal ones which require:

- Coherence
- Humility
- Transparency/Honesty
- Dialogicity
- Sensibility
- Amorosity
- Conviction
- Commitment
- Joy
- Hope
- Scientific competence
- Critical competence
- Ethical sense
- Aesthetical sense
- Generosity
- Openness to the other and to the world, etc...

Being a pedagogue is, then, to be awake to the human development of her/himself and of others, given that one needs to know oneself and to try and improve or develop further before one can introduce another to the necessary conditions for his or her respective paths.

In order to accomplish this attitude, we suggest three complementary methods: Creativity Training Program, Writing the Self and Silence Education.

Creativity Training Program

Using a Systemic Approach to Creativity (Isaksen, et al., 1994), we usually organise a training program around its four dimensions: Person, Press (climate or context), Process, and Product.

Working the 'Person' dimension, we try to understand that being creative is, in essence, to realise who we are, what is hidden inside us; and to let this grow to a higher level. What this means is that to be a (more) creative person is to accept that something happens through us so as to uncover the obstacles that prevent the growth of our innate potential that is so frequently inhibited by the process of acculturation.

Working the 'Press' dimension, we try to understand the elements of the organisational climate that stimulate, or obstruct, the manifestation and development of creative behaviours. That is, in which ways a person can feel more or less capable, more or less confident in him/herself and in his/her capacities according to the situation in which he/she finds him/herself. We also try to realise that each one of us is, simultaneously, cause and consequence of the group climate process making.

These two dimensions are part of what we call centration. Time and silence are needed because observation and reflection are necessary; we need to empty our mind because we need to learn to unlearn.

In approaching the 'Process' dimension, we try to understand our own creative process by developing specific skills to solve problems in which there is not a known or a unique solution to follow. This is a time to learn and practise some generating and focusing creativity tools and techniques. It is a hard, difficult, but also a playful time because, in order to improve our personal and group skills for creative problem solving, we must combine our divergent, multidirectional and flexible thinking, along with our traditional, convergent, and logical thinking. We are, therefore, and in some ways, giving space to action.

And, at last, the 'Product' dimension. According to O' Quin and Besemer (cf. Isaksen, et al., 1994), creative products are evaluated from three different aspects:

- *Novelty* analyses the level of originality inside the product.
- *Resolution* looks at the way the product solves the problem or situation for which it was created.
- *Elaboration and Synthesis* are directed to understand the product's characteristics that are beyond the basic requirements of problem solving, namely the importance of things such as appearance, elegance, attractiveness, etc.

If, as we have already said, this is a brief presentation of a Creativity Program, it is because we believe that a creative product is, in itself, a symbol of the greatest educational goal: that is the personal self-fulfilment, the total 'development of a human being—as a person, as a citizen and as a professional' (Dias, 1997) or, in other words, a human being full of novelty, efficiency, elegance, and attractiveness.

Finally, the fourth dimension, the 'Product', is the one that brings us to celebration and blessing. People involved in the program are the workers, the reason for celebrating and the work itself – and, as 'the work is [always] very good' (Gen. 1, 31), it needs to be blessed and sanctified. To do so, we need to allow ourselves to become more at ease, we need to relax and be happy with the way we are—here and now.

We then create different spaces and different situations that challenge each one of us to use the whole of our senses and capacities value, we want the celebration to help us:

- a. inspire and commit ourselves to action;
- b. do more, do better, do things differently;
- c. deepen our interpersonal relationships;
- d. transform our reality.

The following are some strategies that we have used:

- a. *We get out of the limited space of a classroom as often as we can.* We believe that getting out of a classroom can be a way of allowing ourselves to behave differently from the socially accepted stereotypes; different from those fake

identities that, so often, do not allow us to be ourselves, and certainly not to be 'more ourselves'.

- b. *We play games*, because, during the program, we use a dynamic methodology to think about the theory with the practice—one in relation to the other, and one because of the other. Games are a way of using a playful methodology, putting each person in a more comfortable situation, avoiding value judgements and anxiety feelings.
- c. *We use our body. We dance together*. Assuming that we are a body, instead of having it, we try to get closer to it through a deep listening to its sensations – in order to get closer to our true self (Marroquín & Villa, 1995: 59). Sensibility, beyond the use of the richness of the senses, has something to do with being open, with experience, with the capacity to be surprised, of seeing beyond the obvious, of rejuvenating our old ways of seeing people and things (Aldana, 1996:41). Because interpersonal communication is like dancing, our dance is created with the other. Dancing needs, on the one hand, the involvement of the one who dances and, on the other hand, it is a scheme that we create together (Adler & Towne, 1999:15). Sometimes, and going a little further, we dance 'in mirror', looking into each other's eyes. Because, in looking into the eyes of the other one, I can see my soul. Because considering otherness, I recognise my identity. Because in giving, receiving and trusting the other, I recognise my strengths. Because by proclaiming myself as a sender, I need acceptance on the part of the receiver.
- d. *We draw, we paint, we write, we create symbols that define us*. We look for the awareness of the path already made: such as one who ends a phase in order to allow a new cycle of life to begin; such as one who, at the end of a fight, takes care of the wounded, buries the dead ('dead' in the sense of what we no longer need, what we need to abandon), celebrates victory (because there are no losers here) and, then, feeds oneself to be ready for the next fight.
- e. *We talk. We are silent. We laugh together*. Sometimes it happens that we cry together... What matters is to let appear the personal inner truth (emotions, intentions and commitment), a way to communicate with the most hidden roots of ourselves.

Writing the Self

When we use the expression *Writing the Self* we are referring to an existential investigation exercise, which allows the person to take pieces of his/her concrete life and living and to analyse them in a written form, aiming at a progressive active vigilance over the self. By writing it down, the person tries to see life circumstances more clearly. Life itself, made objective in the written text, demands that one take responsibility for the correction of 'what is' in order to approach and become 'what should be'.

G. Gusdorf dedicates hundreds of pages to the so-called self-writing and considers it a privileged way to the objectifying of the conscience. We could further say that the writing about the self is the privileged way to the unification of the person, especially when it is manuscript. Effectively, the hand that holds the pen and makes it slide over the paper at the same time that makes one's thoughts, sensations or feelings become objective, keeps a unity between these immaterial realities and the concrete form of their translation into words:

The use of the pen tends to exteriorise an intimate conscience that, projecting itself on the paper, adopts a new knowledge. The inner space is thereby shown in the exterior with the purpose of searching, for the subject and his eventual readers, a better knowledge of their identity (Gusdorf, 1991: 22).

The proposal of several concrete questions for self-analysis made in a specific training environment, although losing spontaneity (it is not *strictu sensu* a biographical narrative nor a diary), keeps potentialities of honesty, authenticity and surveillance/fidelity to itself that makes it a writing of the self (this methodology, started by André Rochais in his therapy and pedagogical activity in France, Spain and Québec, was introduced in Portugal by Maria de los Angeles de los Rios and by the organism of formation Novahumanitas).

If life is a very serious 'asking and answering' (Frankl, 1994: 537), the proposal of the writing of the self intends to look at that life dialogue, assume it and make it objective for each of the trainees. It is a means of existential research that introduces in the academic circle a dimension of commitment of each one with oneself and what one owes to the world by the fact of being who he is. The writing of the self, even faced as a school exercise, 'is not an indifferent writing; it is a different writing that intervenes as a duplication of the personality'. (Gusdorf, 1991: 130), intending to attain the most complete unification of the same personality.

Through the writing, which becomes an object, the subject distinguishes himself and separates himself from the other and from himself. The text or the simple notes that come up are and are not he. On the other hand, they are his work, his image. They show an existential reality lived and established thanks to the language and through an act of will. They are a sign of the individual's personality for if he were not radically different from the others there would be no justification for an exercise of writing the self. But on the other hand, the writing also shows a fracture of the individual himself: 'There is a radical discontinuity between the raw material of the conscience and the secondary material of the expressed, spoken or written conscience' (Gusdorf, 1991: 41).

There is a self that lives, a self that feels, a self that watches to live and to feel, and a self that makes judgements so that the self who lives might live better.

Put another way, this process corresponds to a transformation of sensations into conscience and of conscience into knowledge:

The writer, showing his own version of the inner self, brings about a reunification of his intimate and exterior being; he becomes another, different from the one he was before, thanks to that enlargement that allowed to deepen the conscience of himself that he caused. His existential statute is changed. The writings of the self, from the most simple and rudimentary to the most complicated sumptuous ones, answer to the same intention of confirming, correcting and justifying the personal existence' (Gusdorf, 1991: 139–140).

We write to see clearly in the circumstances life offers us. But wanting to see clearly, by our own initiative or because we have accepted such a challenge, we are already starting to question our own responsibility, thereby starting to rectify what one is with a view to what one should be, foreseen as an unmistakable task.

The writing of the self, even when it is guided, aims at an acknowledgement of one's own that is neither contemplative nor descriptive but which contemplates and describes with a view to a progressive active surveillance over oneself. This is done in a regulator and rehabilitative intervention, begun by a dialogue between the superficial self and the deep self that, as a consequence, intends to fill the emptiness noticed between the demanding of the essential and the triviality of daily life.

Some Implications for Adult Education or for Students in a Pedagogue Education Program

As we have proposed above, spirituality is a situated perception emerging out of the onto-teleological basis of the human being. Pedagogues in initial professional development are usually young (from 20 to 30 years old), and they are not used to paying close attention to their lives. The *Writing the Self* exercise may help them to become more aware of their own identity.

Trainees are asked (1) to concentrate on concrete points of their personal life and (2) to consider some questions of guided self-analysis on these specific points. Then, (3) they answer in a written form as honestly and as fully as possible. The answers should be filed in a portfolio and shared—if the student wishes—in some particular moment in the class. It must be mentioned that, although the students are asked to write down their notes as completely, and as vividly as possible, they are assured that they are free to omit whatever they wish when they share and also, in their final report which is presented at the end of the semester. This process aims at helping them articulate feelings and action, starting with the transformation of feelings into self-awareness, then of awareness into knowledge and coherent action. No one but the student will be the ultimate judge of this action and commitment.

Silence Education

This present section is organised in two parts, namely:

- what Silence Education is, in general, and
- what Silence Education is in the specific field of teacher and adult education.

What is Silence Education?

The ‘lesson of silence’ was a product of Maria Montessori’s work, and was born from a privileged moment of activity with a group of children, in which she tried to retrieve and promote their taste for silence by focussing the children’s attention on sounds that, otherwise, barely could be heard. This moment was, therefore, an occasion to initiate children into interiority, a path towards spirituality.

Today, more than ever, it is clear that both adults and small children need to learn the lesson of silence, living at the pace they do; in a world where they are forced to produce more and more; where they trust neither life nor other people, and often do not rely on themselves; where people are afraid of being alone and, therefore, live surrounded by things, by confusion and by other people; where they adapt themselves to the world of material things, feeling nevertheless divided; where there is no external peace, because there is no inner peace. Moreover, this silence is a silence that is neither empty nor dead, but is rather simultaneously a condition, the means and result of the interiority of the creative being, which may manifest itself in how one listens to:

- one’s own (inner) word;
- the words of others;
- the word of things and of circumstances;
- the Word of God.

Paying Attention to One’s Own/Someone Else’s Word

One is, to oneself, often the most unknown of all.

As we adapt ourselves more and more to the outside world, we become divided as people: we turn our back on many things that are inside ourselves because we consider them either harmful or dangerous, because we are afraid of not being accepted, because we do not dare to fight against the established conventions. And we forget that it is precisely inside each one of us that resides what is the most profound in our lives, the source of our own joy, of our ability to love, to laugh, to be creative. We forget that it is in silence, our innermost guide, wisdom itself, which helps us to capture the voices that exist inside ourselves.

Out of this inner listening arises, in fact, the capacity to listen to someone else, which is more than simply responsible solidarity and coexistence with others. It is openness to new adventures and challenges that others always and inevitably place

before us; it is empathy and mutual comprehension; it is to feel what the other feel; it is the ability of putting oneself in someone else's place; it is to be open both to their words and to their silences; it is to practice the real meaning of sociability; it is active listening.

Paying Attention to the Word of Things and of Circumstances

In some aspects, this refers to the point mentioned above. However, it may be useful to take this as a separate form of listening, in order to somewhat extend our point of view. Listening to things and paying attention to circumstances means:

- to feel a part of the universe – everything we have and possess, either material things, or nature itself, are ours as a loan and should be taken care of by us. Thus, they need our attention, so that they will never ever deteriorate;
- to be able to read the events of the world and to draw lessons of wisdom from those events, so that one realises that there is a sense of direction and a sense of growth, even when everything seems to indicate otherwise. We should take into consideration that there is something which is going on in the Universe, something similar to gestation and birth – a plan, a purpose for all the events, something Teilhard de Chardin stressed in all his works.

Paying Attention to the Word of Transcendence

Many words have been found by men, from all times and places, to refer to the Supreme Being. Some have pointed out its transcendent character while others, its immanence. Because we come from a culture that is mainly Christian, we call it God. However we also do understand that naming it is not an important issue.

Fundamentally, then, to pay attention to the Word of Transcendence is to merely repeat the above ideas. It would make no sense if it were otherwise. Does not Transcendence speak to us through ourselves, through others, through the things and through all the circumstances around us? To pay attention to the Word of Transcendence is to let the great Author place His name on His work. It is listening to the Silence.

The analysis of the part of silence in spiritual education, as in general human communication implies that we consider it in parallel with the part of the word. That is what we are schematising in figure 2, summarising what was said before.

The question that now arises is how, in fact, can Silence Education be taught?

We would stress that we do not have definitive answers. What we present must be seen merely as an attempt to pursue a path, a means that, among many others, may be of help. Nonetheless, this is what we have chosen to employ in teacher education and in our work with small children.

For many years, pedagogues' initial professional development has dealt with Silence Education as a methodology in working with children. After a brief discussion of the meaning and the importance of silence, we used to rapidly move

		Word	Silence
Negative		Insult; Verbal offence	Refusal of communication
Neutral		Communication between characters (from social image to social image)	Absence of communication
Positive	Exterior	Expression of the exterior environment of the person's superficiality (for example, weather, sports, politics, theories, opinions)	Conditions for communication - to have access to the listening of the exterior word (of himself and the other); - Emergency of the inner word from oneself
	Interior	Expression of the person in progressive levels of depth: of the experiences of the periphery of intimacy (for example experiences of professional work, tastes, attitudes and feelings).	Communication as a wish of communion - Active listening to his onto-theological background and the sense of the other (<i>logoi</i>); - Opening to the Transcendent (<i>LOGOS</i>)
	Maximum	Full expression of the person in his background intimacy, values and attitudes and even in his failures and limits.	<i>Koinonia</i> : - Communion of wishing the best for and from himself and the others. - Communion in the Being and with the Being.

Figure 2. Levels of communication

on to present and explain some 'techniques' of this type of work with children. At the time it seemed enough – either because the pedagogues in initial professional development were already familiar with techniques of inwardness, or because of our own lack of experience (or lack of sensitivity) did not allow us to understand their difficulties.

In a country like Portugal, in which the majority of the population used to be practising Catholics, many students were acquainted with the concept, and needed silence as a requirement in their development of a profound and mature inner life. However, religious practices are not so widespread any longer. While we are conscious that it is not only in a religious environment that the spiritual sense can be developed and can be enriched, we recognise that many people have been losing their capacity to look inward. Certainly, there was clearly a growing distance between the message of Silence Education that we had tried to transmit and the one that was more commonly understood. So, we have tried to motivate our students to experiment with this specific methodology of work, and thereby feel the meaning and the value of silence. Accordingly, we began having Yoga classes with the students, with particular stress being placed on relaxation, concentration and focusing sessions. After several months, while our joint work took place in parallel with the theoretical training, just as Yoga teaches us, we sought the union of the body and the mind and the union of the mind and the spirit. Put another way, we worked on the human being as a whole, beginning with the body, in order to obtain a final effect: a greater degree of serenity, and greater physical, psychic, emotional well being, the anthropological condition for spiritual development. As pedagogue trainers, we can do no more than facilitate experiences to show the ways towards a greater understanding.

As for significant apprenticeships on the part of students, we know for sure that they only arise as a result of personal, inward work, which emerge from each one's will. And if, for some people, Yoga classes are only mechanical (physical) apprenticeships, for others they have become ways of entering more and more profound dimensions of being, that is to say, means of achieving a progressive change in one's way of living and acting. We know that we will not change the world, but we are certain that we have managed to change the world for some.

Evaluating

At the end of the program, when evaluating the way we work, people are asked to put into drawings and short phrases their experiences and the most significant learning during the training program. The feedback they produce can be considered another sort of writing the self exercise, as we can see in the examples below. After several years of experience, we consider that this learning is situated essentially in four sectors:

- Self-acknowledgement
- Ability of existing in relation to oneself
- Ability of existing in relation to others.
- Decision taking (see Figures 3–6).

These are not things that they did not know before...*in their minds*. But, perhaps, for the very first time, they began to realise them *in their being*.

Self-Acknowledgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I am learning to know myself. Until now I had not done many things that, after all, I know and I can do.</i> - <i>My notebook is something very precious to me since I expressed on it everything I was feeling at the moment and I confessed some secrets, which is something I have never accomplished before.</i> - <i>This subject made me set a new goal: to be weighed—I cannot do whatever I feel like</i> - <i>It helped me to reflect upon things that I had never thought as being important: the feelings I experience in daily activities and the importance it has in my acts and attitudes.</i> - <i>I have learnt how to identify feelings, sensations etc and where they come from</i> - <i>The exercise in which we have spoken about forgiveness was the one that touched me the most and the one that brought me more advantages. I thought about what it is to forgive, about the great step of generosity and healing it is. I thought about the great step I have to give. I understood that I have forgotten but not forgiven and it still hurts me. I still have not forgiven but I have given a step towards it.</i> - <i>I have always been a very sensitive person and I thought it was a fault but now I know it is not.</i> - <i>I have learnt to know myself better, to deal with some conflict situation in a different way.</i> - <i>I had the chance to recognise that, sometimes, the small (and normal) can be very meaningful.</i> - <i>I have learnt that inside of us there is a potential. I do not have to feel sorry for myself but I need to go on fighting. Without risk taking nothing can be gained.</i> - <i>I have learnt more skills for working in a group and I learned more about myself.</i>
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Figure 3. Self Acknowledgement

Ability of existing – in relation to oneself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I have managed to expose my feelings in a classroom and in front of a lot of persons; I have managed to analyse growth and I began to make judgements for decision taking.</i> - <i>One of the things I have learnt is about the ability I have now to define myself as a person without being always trying to picture me as a part of a family, a society etc.</i> - <i>I have learnt how to transform a fault into a quality, trying my best to do it</i> - <i>It is not that I have learnt this only now but I started to pay more attention and give more importance to the moments of reflection about my path of life.</i> - <i>I have learnt to love me more</i> - <i>I used to face life with anger, asking myself a lot of times ‘Why? Why does this happen to me?’ Now I have learnt to ask, ‘What can I do in this situation? How can I make it help me being a better person?’</i> - <i>I remembered that a problem is big if we see it that way.</i> - <i>It made me have more confidence in facing the future. I am realising that I am not alone in a crowd.</i> - <i>I am learning not to be so afraid of taking risks.</i> - <i>I have learnt that inside of us there is a potential. I do not have to feel sorry for myself but I need to go on fighting. Without risk taking nothing can be gained.</i> - <i>I have realised that one cannot be restricted to ‘yes’ and ‘no’, to ‘black and white’. ‘Maybe’ and other colours are also an option.</i>
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Figure 4. Ability of existing with self

Ability of existing – in relation to the other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>I have learnt to accept other people, to understand their way of acting.</i>- <i>These classes and activities helped me being less shy, communicating more with people and having more faith in me.</i>- <i>The exercise in which we have spoken about forgiveness was the one that touched me the most and the one that brought me more advantages. I thought about what it is to forgive, about the great step of generosity and healing it is. I thought about the great step I have to give. I understood that I have forgotten but not forgiven and it still hurts me. I still have not forgiven but I have given a step towards it.</i>- <i>The training program helped us to create a team spirit, to break barriers. It showed that sometimes it is worthwhile to be different.</i>- <i>I have learnt more skills for working in a group and I learned more about myself.</i>- <i>I have realised that one cannot be restricted to 'yes' and 'no', to 'black and white'. 'Maybe' and other colours are also an option.</i>
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Figure 5. Ability of existing with other

Decision taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>I have managed to analyse my personal growth and I began to make judgements for decision taking.</i>- <i>I have learnt to define my priorities and to make decisions</i>
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Figure 6. Decision taking

Conclusions

On the one hand, when analysing the feedback of our students, we find that, although distinct, the methodologies we described aim for progressive self-consciousness, autonomy and personal fulfilment. Consequently, all of them can be seen as applications of the definitions of education and spirituality we assumed and its importance is directly proportional to the ability of promoting spiritual education and human development.

On the other hand, silence seems to have a special part in this program: people, as creative and communicative beings, manifest (and educate) themselves not only through the Word (and activities) but also through Silence.

So far, silence is the most important condition in our work. In an environment that is facilitated by means of silence, the writing of the self-exercises, which arise from daily experience, helps to transform sensation into awareness into coherent action. Each and every dimension of the Creativity Training Program can be an object of analysis in these exercises. Thus we get to a learning of freedom in the small or major decisions whatever the organisational environment might be. By means of this apprenticeship of freedom, the person faces what we have called the onto-teleological basis of oneself, which is confirmed by concrete actions of ones existences. Such a dynamism does not leave aside any of the dimensions of the person; it demands from each one a permanent attention to oneself, and absolute respect for one's central nucleon of one's personality.

Thus, more than a condition, silence is the path of creativity from communication to Communion:

- with the onto-teleological basis of oneself;
- with others, in the best existing in both oneself and them;
- in the opportunity to face the Source of Being, we dare to name God.

As we have mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the target of the programme here presented are pedagogues. In this process, since pedagogue education is a subsystem that provides conditions for people to develop their skills as facilitators of the development of others, pedagogues-to-be must face the challenge of their own spiritual education. This is why we try to remark that, whatever the activity might be, spiritual development cannot be left aside. The hurry or the search for effectiveness might spoil all the effort in the sense of contributing so that the students truly ask themselves the questions that established human wisdom. Or put another way, what Eaude (2003) repeatedly affirms: 'Who we are matters more than what we say'.

In what concerns pedagogues' preparation for spiritual education, we must also take into consideration what Neiman clearly remarks:

In order to teach future teachers how to help develop the spirituality of their students, we must recognise some depth of spirituality within ourselves. I do not think knowledge or 'expertise' in academic aspects of spirituality is, without an additional factor, enough to yield such depth. We can all point to academics who know a good deal about the history of spirituality, spiritual concepts and so on, without being themselves spiritual. Spirituality is not simply a knowledge of facts, or mastery of a certain disciplinary subject matter. (...) Beyond facts or methods, spirituality typically involves a journey of sorts. Correlatively, teaching spirituality involves initiating others into such a journey. But just as mountain guides need more than theoretical knowledge in order to be successful in their work, good spiritual guides

must themselves have travelled at least some distance along a spiritual path' (Neiman, 2000: 572).

The relationship between trainer and pedagogue that is established in this context is consequently an asymmetrical relationship. The one who assumes the function of trainer suggests a path which s/he had already walked focusing on the well being of each and all of the trainees. However, as s/he questions, stimulates and suggests challenges, s/he knows himself to be walking a path in which whoever does not move forward, recedes. Thus, the initial professional development for pedagogues in our programme of creativity, each one of the tasks suggested to the students is also a task for the trainers. And if it seems to be necessary to develop within them 'sensitivity, flexibility, ability to live with not knowing all the answers and a willingness to address difficult issues', similarly to what Eaude suggests (2003), we have to accept, ourselves, the challenge of exploring our own beliefs and values, including what is potentially painful.

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SOULFUL LEARNING: A VITAL COMPONENT OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Mary Nuttall

School of Education (Vic), Ballarat, Australia

Introduction

This chapter argues that soulful learning is a vital component of any curriculum development. Initially, concepts of soulful learning are identified and linked to theories of multiple intelligences and notions of curriculum. Some transformative processes implemented to foster soulful learning experiences according to specific aspects of curriculum development are explored within three discrete learning contexts. Groups of stakeholders involved in the learning contexts include a grade of primary school students enrolled at a Catholic primary school, a number of teachers currently teaching in Catholic primary schools and some classes of tertiary students within the School of Education at a Catholic University.

The chapter is divided into three sections:

- Conceptualisation of soulful learning
- Conceptualisation of curriculum
- Exploration of aspects of soulful learning within three learning contexts.

Conceptualisation of Soulful Learning

Soulful learning is based on a belief that real learning occurs when the whole person is involved in any learning process rather than a fragment of that person, for example, the cognitive domain or the physical domain. According to Miller (2000), 'To deny spirit is to deny an essential element of our being and thus diminish ourselves and our approach to education' (p. 9). Furthermore, Miller argues that 'Soulful education can help bring a *balance* to our education between such factors as inner and outer, the rational and intuitive, the qualitative and the quantitative' (p. 9) dimensions of learning.

Miller's soulful educational philosophy is reflected well in Kessler's (2000, p. 17) practical development of the 'seven gateways to the soul in education'. These 'gateways' are perceived to emanate from the central point of each student's 'yearning for deep connection' or sense of belonging to self, others, contexts for learning and possibly, a higher being. In honouring students' deep need for connect- edness, soulful teachers facilitate learning contexts in which Kessler's 'gateways to the soul' are open to endless transformative learning possibilities. Thus, soulful teachers develop curriculum programs that nurture students' souls and bodies by providing non-threatening teaching/learning environments in which students have regular opportunities to

- experience silence and solitude;
- explore questions about the meaning and purpose of life;
- celebrate joy, beauty and gratitude in being alive;
- develop their creative potential;
- stretch beyond their perceived limits in specific curriculum areas and social development; and
- be led gently through transitions in life, for example, from primary to secondary school.

It can be argued that soulful learning is well represented in the holistic approach to learning initially identified in Gardner's (1993) theory of the multiple intelligences and, more recently extended to include the emotional and spiritual intelligences. Whilst every person is endowed with a capacity to learn in a number of ways, some people are obviously more or less gifted to learn within particular learning areas. Teachers who subscribe to a soulful curriculum will be familiar with the components of each of the intelligences thus far identified and will constantly seek ways to ensure that each student's 'gifts' are recognised, are applied in creative ways within relevant learning contexts, and are celebrated by other students and members of the school community.

Armstrong (2000, p. 2) provides a good overview of the eight intelligences subscribed to by Gardner and represented most constantly in current literature and research on multiple intelligences and concomitant learning styles. Armstrong's concept of the intelligences are summarised thus:

Verbal-linguistic intelligence	the capacity to use words effectively
Logical/mathematical intelligence	the capacity to use numbers effectively
Visual spatial intelligence	the ability to perceive the spatial world accurately...and to perform transformations on those perceptions
Bodily/kinaesthetic intelligence	expertise in using one's whole body to express ideas and feelings
Musical/rhythmic intelligence	the capacity to perceive, discriminate within, transform and express musical forms

Interpersonal intelligence	the ability to perceive and make distinctions in the moods, intentions, motivations and feelings of other people
Intrapersonal intelligence	Self-knowledge and the ability to act adaptively on the basis of that knowledge
Naturalist intelligence	expertise in the recognition and classification of the numerous species – the flora and fauna – of an individual's environment

Lazear (2003), in proclaiming the attributes of teaching within the multiple intelligence framework states that, 'The 8-in-1 strategy is one of the best techniques for getting all students actively involved with material you are teaching. There is something for everyone in each 8-in-1 lesson' (p. 17). Furthermore, 'In the 8-in-1 lessons, students become actively involved with the material, rather than passive recipients of whatever the teacher doles out for the day. Students take responsibility for their own and each others' learning. I know of no better strategy to effectively teach the ultimate goal of education – creating lifelong learners' (pp. 17–18).

The profound impact that the 8-in-1 learning process has on both the learning and the learner reflects well a soulful emphasis in teaching and learning. A summary of key discoveries of contemporary brain research about such learning processes is described accordingly:

- The more a person learns something, the more he or she really learns it.
- The more ways a person learns something, the more he or she will remember it.
- The more ways a person learns something, the more he or she genuinely understands it and it becomes a part of his or her being (Houston 1982; Jensen 1999; Sylwester 2000; Wolfe 2001, as cited in Lazear, 2003, pp. 17–18).

It can be argued that the eight intelligences described above do not function without the interplay of both emotional and spiritual intelligences. Teachers who facilitate soulful learning experiences seek to establish learning environments in which emotional intelligence, the intelligent use of emotions' (Bodine & Crawford, 1999, p. 1) is acknowledged and fostered. Moreover, teachers and students in such learning contexts distinguish between outcomes and aptitudes within the expression of emotional intelligence. It is critical for students to be encouraged to develop both 'an aptitude for handling challenging situations whose expression may vary according to environmental contingencies' and 'successful resolution of emotional challenges' (Bar-On and Parker, 2000, p. 461), each learning interaction.

Spiritual intelligence gives each of us the ability to 'discriminate, to be creative, to change the rules and to alter situations' (Zohar & Marshall 2000, p. 5). Hence

soulful teachers will ensure that opportunities are provided for students to recognise and to practise use of their spiritual intelligence in conjunction with each of the eight intelligences noted above.

Conceptualisation of Curriculum

Curriculum is conceptualised according to the perspectives of various curriculum developers, for example, teachers who may be represented in various fields of education, or teachers working within school-based curriculum contexts or personnel working in broader contexts such as state, national and international education departments. Given such a variety of contexts and perspectives it may be impossible to encompass the rich essence of curriculum in a single definition that expresses the needs of all curriculum makers. Curriculum can be portrayed in a number of ways, for instance, curriculum may be conceptualised as precise or obscure; narrow or open; traditional or contemporary in nature. Concepts of curriculum provide the bases for understanding and contextualising soulful learning experiences.

Writers such as Eisner (1979), Egan (1978), Marsh and Willis (1995), Pinar (1975), Print (1993), Schubert (1986), Smith & Lovat (2003) and Zais (1976) are in agreement that all definitions and concepts of curriculum derive from the Latin *currere* denoting both running and a race track. Hamilton (1989) and Schubert (1986) view *currere* positively in relation to a current interpretation of curriculum. Hamilton (as cited in Jackson, 1992, p. 5) makes a link between the historic athletic event and curriculum in an educational context. He perceives a 'structural wholeness and sequential completeness' as applied to a course of study or a curriculum program. Schubert (1986, p. 33) views *currere* in relation to an individual's lived experience; he identifies the individual in relation to curriculum development whereas Print (1993) recognises the social nature of lived experience where experiences are shared and reconceptualisations are formed.

Smith and Lovat (2003) identify different characteristics of both runners and running tracks. They make important analogies between runners with differing ages, genders and handicaps and running tracks characterised by varieties of shape, place and condition. Such derivations of curriculum are useful building blocks when exploring the links between curriculum development and soulful learning. The runners are analogous to the participants of curriculum whilst the running track can be perceived as the theory behind a curriculum as well as a curriculum program. Further, *currere* can be portrayed as the actual running of a race symbolised in the processes of planning, implementation and evaluation of curriculum and the race itself seen as the products of curriculum or learning outcomes.

Print (1993) conceptualises curriculum as 'the way developers think and act about curriculum, particularly in terms of curriculum development' (p. xvii). Hence, curriculum concepts do not exist in a vacuum. Rather, they emanate from and develop within individual and group historical, social and political contexts.

Despite controversies noted in conceptualising curriculum, a review of literature reveals a number of components which writers claim to be essential features of any curriculum. Print (1993) claims that three features are common to all forms of curricula:

- formalised course of study designed for learners
- conscious planning that attempts to determine learning outcomes
- some form of structure to facilitate that learning (p. 4).

Writers such as Marsh and Willis (1999) espouse a more flexible view of curriculum than that suggested by writers noted above. They claim that they hold an ‘organic, holistic view of curriculum and instruction’, which they perceive to be ‘an inter-related set of plans and experiences that a student undertakes under the guidance of the school’ (p. 11). They see such a curriculum as ‘the lived curriculum’ (p. 10) in which there are planned and unplanned experiences and a premium is placed on the interactions which take place between students and teachers. This perception of curriculum suggests a dynamic approach to curriculum development whereby teachers merge national and state curriculum directives with school-based curriculum development, whilst allowing scope for quality soulful teacher/student learning interactions at classroom levels.

Two further concepts of curriculum that have particular bearing on the development of a soulful-based curriculum are those articulated by Illich (1970) and Postman and Weingartner (1969). Illich advocates a process of ‘deschooling society’, contending that, ‘We have all learned most of what we know outside school’ (p. 35), thereby proclaiming a school-without-walls curriculum that capitalises on the educational resources present in individual local communities.

Postman and Weingartner’s ‘What’s worth knowing questions curriculum’ is built on the sound premises that ‘the art and science of asking questions is the source of all knowledge’ and ‘there is nothing more worth knowing, for any of us, than the continuing process of how to make viable meanings’. As Postman and Weingartner contend, ‘This implies that students will spend a great deal of time finding answers to their questions. Question asking and answer finding go hand in hand’ (pp. 84–85). Such processes are deemed to foster connectedness as students, individually and together, pose and seek answers to questions pertaining to curriculum programs developed within the discrete curriculum areas.

According to teachers in a Catholic primary school selected for a previous study (Nuttall, 2000), whilst school policy documents make little specific reference to the notion of curriculum, within the learning and teaching policies recommended, an integrated curriculum negotiated between students and teacher is encouraged. Furthermore, the curriculum purports to challenge each student to recognise and develop his/her specific learning capacities and gifts.

Despite a lack of specificity about curriculum, findings from interviews undertaken with a selection of teachers (Nuttall, 2000) reveal strong implicit allegiance to particular attributes of curriculum. These attributes are expressed in Schubert’s (1989) view of *currere* as ‘an individual’s lived experience’ and Toombs and

Tierney's (1993, p. 178) notion of 'a working definition of curriculum' that must allow 'plenty of room for local initiatives'.

Teachers indicate an openness to the revision of some school-based curriculum programs by making claims such as:

'It's good to have a fresh look at where curriculum is heading, in line with what we are doing at the moment. We have discovered that we are doing lots of good things but at the same time we can grow by constantly reviewing our curriculum and development' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 85).

'We need to look at things that are more relevant so the expanding scope of curriculum is becoming more adequate as we go on and we include different areas in the curriculum and perhaps take out things that content-wise weren't proving to be of much value' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 226).

'It's vital to continue to explore the curriculums offering at our school (sic), what's in it, how we teach and how children learn' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 234).

Curriculum policies and practices identified suggest that teachers are able to 'fine-tune' their school-based curriculum programs to accommodate national and state curriculum directives. At the same time, it can be argued that Catholic primary schools promote a 'lived curriculum' (Marsh & Willis, 1999, p. 10) in which there are planned and unplanned learning experiences and a premium is placed on the quality of interactions which take place between students and teachers, the hallmarks of a soulful curriculum. Further examples of soulful approaches to curriculum development are discussed in section 3.

Soulful Learning Explored Within Three Learning Contexts

The three learning contexts represented in this section include:

- a class of students enrolled at a Catholic primary school;
- classes of undergraduate students enrolled in curriculum development units within the School of Education at Australian Catholic University; and
- teachers within specific Catholic primary schools.

Soulful Learning Developed Within a Class of Students Enrolled at a Catholic Primary School

With a class of grade four students from a Catholic primary school the author of this chapter had an opportunity to plan, implement and evaluate some soulful learning experiences centred around the topic of 'the local community' and adapted from the SOSE (Studies of Society and Environment) key learning area. SOSE, one of eight prescribed key learning areas is detailed for Years Preparatory to Year 10

within the Curriculum and Standards Framework, a curriculum planning document stipulated for use in schools in Victoria, Australia.

Justification for the planned soulful learning experiences enacted within a study of the local community came from a variety of sources, some of which had their origins in timeless curriculum writings from the 1960s and 1970s. For example, Postman and Weingartner's (1969) 'What's-worth-knowing questions curriculum' (p. 84) influenced the decision that students individually and in groups formulate soul-searching questions about their local community and draw on their dominant intelligences to seek and to demonstrate rich, comprehensive answers to those questions.

A study of the local community was built also on Illich's (1970) reasonable claim that, 'We have all learned most of what we know outside school. Pupils do most of their learning without, and often despite their teachers' (p. 35). Much of the study would subsequently occur outside the walls of the classroom where the students would be encouraged to use their senses to really savour the essence of the local community.

O'Donohue (1997) has argued that 'The greatest philosophers admit that to a large extent all knowledge comes through the senses. The senses are our bridges to the world' (p. 84). The value in encouraging students to use specific senses to immerse themselves in learning contexts such as a study of the local community can be well justified in O'Donohue's beautiful evocation of the senses of sight, hearing and touch. He writes about the sense of sight, 'The eye when it opens is like the dawn breaking in the night. When it opens, a new world is there' (p. 86) and 'When you really look deeply at something, it becomes part of you' (p. 87). For the sense of hearing O'Donohue contends that, 'With the sense of hearing, we listen to creation' (p. 98) and claims that 'Our sense of touch connects us to the world in an intimate way...Touch and the world of touch brings us out of the anonymity of distance into the intimacy of belonging' (p. 101).

It was anticipated that joyful interplay, particularly among the senses of sight, hearing and touch, would evoke in students a deep connection with and respect for critical aspects of their local community. Hence valuable initial groundwork for our study of the local community took place on a high hill overlooking our city. There the students were invited to use all of their senses to spiritually connect themselves to the physical and material community displayed graphically before them. In our quiet and sacred 'space' atop the hill the students were encouraged initially to pose deep, rich personal questions to determine what they wanted to find out about their city. Subsequently, the students were invited to form groups to prioritise their questions and to suggest ways and means of finding answers to those questions. Students recorded the fruits of their reflections and discussions on large sheets of paper that were displayed for all to see and to use as further planning documents for development of the study. During this phase of their study, there were numerous opportunities for students to draw upon their own and to recognise each other's dominant intelligences, including emotional and spiritual intelligences, and to respect each other's points of views and contributions to the study.

This introduction to the study was indeed a soulful learning experience as the students' senses were stimulated when they connected with themselves, each other and the community displayed in the distance. In the discussions and plans that followed the curriculum negotiations, it became evident that there was an abundance of valuable educational resources in the community that could be used to formulate networks of deep soulful learning. The resources included people, for example, elders who would be able to help the students tap into the history of the area, and physical resources including the creek, gardens and material resources such as shops, libraries etc. Further refinement of the students' initial plans provided a sound framework in which the local community would be studied in depth over two terms.

Subsequently, on further refinement of the curriculum, students' dominant multiple intelligences and preferred learning styles were used to channel the learning. For example, students who were 'gifted' with visual, spatial intelligence produced creative murals and collages representing their community, students with a dominant naturalist intelligence gathered information and reported about some of the natural properties of the community, whilst students who loved to use their bodily, kinaesthetic intelligence, in conjunction with students who demonstrated a musical/rhythmic intelligence worked together to produce a play focused on the historical development of the local community.

In further development of the study we subscribed to Moffett's (1994) philosophy expressed within 'the universal schoolhouse' by building on the students' suggestions that they encourage parents and other community members to engage in soulful learning with them and to contribute their expertise in specific curriculum areas. As Moffett suggests, 'Everybody benefits from and contributes to collective knowledge. Rippling is by nature individualised and interactive. It fits the learner and stays spontaneously, alive. It spiritualises learning because everybody is giving to everybody else and helping each other realise themselves' (p. 169). Furthermore, 'What rippling will transmit are not just skills and factual knowledge but qualities of life, ways of relating, and ways of being in the world' (p. 170).

Soulful Learning in Relation to Curriculum Development: Perspectives from Teachers Within Specific Catholic Primary Schools

In this section soulful learning in relation to aspects of curriculum development is explored from the perspectives of teachers within a range of Catholic primary schools. Data for this section are taken from a larger study (Nuttall, 2000), a smaller study focused on teachers' connoisseurship, collaboration and control of curriculum (Nuttall, 2003) and from a subsequent investigation that centred upon teachers' conversations about curriculum development within selected Catholic primary schools (Nuttall, 2005).

Curriculum development is perceived to be an ambiguous term that encapsulates a range of meanings. For example, Marsh and Willis (1999, p. 150) incorporate the term, curriculum development, within the broader concept of curriculum change:

Curriculum change is a generic term that subsumes a whole family of concepts such as 'innovation', 'development' and 'adoption'. It includes changes that can be either planned or unplanned (unintentional, spontaneous or accidental).

Furthermore Marsh and Willis (1999) perceive a close relationship to exist between curriculum change and curriculum development to the point of claiming that they are 'often treated as if they are the same, since the idea of development implies change over time, and any form of curriculum can be considered development of some kind' (p. 149). These insights are of relevance to this section of the chapter where curriculum development is perceived to be a soulful learning process whereby teachers in selected Catholic primary schools collaboratively changed and adapted school-based curriculum programs to incorporate the Curriculum and Standards Framework (Board of Studies, 2000).

It is believed that a positive school climate is a prerequisite for the nourishment of soulful learning among staff members. Some teachers in the studies alluded to supportive school environments in which staff members worked together as a whole staff or in teams to develop revised curriculum programs. Teachers reflect this sense of support in their comments:

'Oh, you can only do what you can do and if you need help, we {staff members} will help.... We've got a good supportive system in the school' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 227).

'The staff has been really good; they've been supportive and they have helped. For example, A. and I are in charge of doing the Maths, but everybody has helped with it. It's been really good' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 264).

'I think it {curriculum change} is a positive thing here. The staff all pitch in and help. It wouldn't survive any other way' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 264).

'Further indicators of supportive school environments are identified in teachers' comments concerning risk-taking and team-building:

'We are encouraged to take steps and to take risks. We are not worried about failures here. I think that is a really important thing. If you are worried, that's when you stick with what you know and you don't branch out' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 252).

'When you've got them {curriculum coordinators} in teams they've got that support again to work with each other...It's only when you're alone I think that the problems are there' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 264).

...'When working on curriculum he {the principal} has put two people on together and the two people back each other and they inspire each other and

when one's down, the other helps, and I think two people together working on it, it just makes it so much easier' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 272).

One of the key elements of soulful learning is that of teacher interaction. Teachers need sufficient time to explore with one another the ramifications of a curriculum innovation such as the Curriculum and Standards Framework. According to Marsh and Willis (1995) 'Time spent debating, defending, and advocating particular points of view is not time wasted if it leads to beneficial change' (1995, p. 138). If teachers value one another and are prepared to listen with the soul not only to the words, but to the nuances accompanying their colleagues' points of view, unique opportunities will occur for rich, collaborative exploration of proposed curriculum developments. Kessler (2000, p. x) expresses this transformation well, 'When soul is present in education, attention shifts, we listen with great care not only to what people say but in the message between the words—tones, gestures, the flicker of feeling across the face. And then we concentrate on what has heart and meaning'. One teacher articulated this transformational process accordingly:

'We've started a path now: a process of change and investigating things here at the school. I think we need to keep that momentum going. I think it has a number of very positive points apart from just that reviewing curriculum and just knowing its ins and outs properly. It's also encouraging the teachers to look more critically at what they do. It encourages professional dialogue among the teachers' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 211).

Another teacher referred to the interactive processes of refining curriculum drafts and the concomitant sense of ownership that occurred as a result:

'What they {curriculum coordinators} did was basically what Cl. and I {curriculum coordinators} did with the Science which was have a rough draft, look at it, compare it with the CSFs, then come back. We actually had it up like wallpaper and got different Levels to write in activities relating to different things: how they teach reading, how they teach writing. We had great input; it was draft after draft. We read through it and I felt that we all had ownership over it' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 267).

The teachers' soulful approach to curriculum development is identified in their concern to develop curriculum programs that are responsive to students' specific learning needs and to critically analyse a range of curriculum programs as a preparation for writing and subsequently owning relevant school-based curriculum programs:

'I think that the main positive is the fact that the children are the ones who are benefiting. That's also the main reason why we are doing it' {curriculum development} (Nuttall, 2000, p. 205).

'I think in this school it {curriculum change} has been very positive. We have been looking at a lot of curriculums and changes so that the staff here

at the moment have ownership of it. And it suits our needs at this particular time and the students that we have' (Nuttall, 2000, p. 206).

Soul Learning Processes Developed with Tertiary Students in the School of Education, Australian Catholic University (ACU)

Within the units for which I am responsible in the School of Education, ACU, each student with his/her dominant intelligences and preferred learning styles is at the centre of planning, implementing and evaluating soulful learning experiences within each unit. As a lecturer I encourage *free inquiry* (ACU Mission Statement) among the students. Our classes are always interactive and students have ample opportunities to connect with one another, to engage in individual and group inquiry learning centred on selected current issues in education and realistic school and classroom scenarios. Much emphasis is placed on encouraging students to recognise and to learn according to their dominant intelligences, including emotional and spiritual intelligences, and to take responsibility for their learning in campus, school-based and community settings.

Course material is organised cogently and imaginatively. At the outset of each semester students are supplied with detailed summaries of each unit to be taught. At all times strong links are made between theory and practice. Hence, students are encouraged to read widely from prescribed and recommended current national and international texts and reputable educational journals. Students are thus exposed to a selection of excellent scholarship on teaching and learning at national and international levels and are encouraged to be critical connoisseurs of the available literature in relation to national, state and local educational directives.

Students are required to apply their readings to their regular field experiences in school communities and broader community settings. The use of regular tutorials, workshops, problem-solving and mini research projects, student presentations, debates, discussions, videos and media analyses enable the students to apply the course material to 'real life' situations and to share their insights with the other students.

During the first class in each unit I invite students to consider a) what they would like to gain from that unit and b) from their own life experiences, what they might contribute to that unit. Ensuing comments and questions enable us to see what rich opportunities are possible when students' multiple intelligences and rich life experiences are brought to bear on the design and delivery of each unit. Only when students and myself have discussed possibilities for the unit is the unit outline distributed and analysed. Where there are perceived gaps in students' and lecturer's expectations for the unit, further discussion ensures that each unit will be as relevant, as soulful and as challenging as possible for each student and the lecturer.

Assessment tasks and assessment strategies are analysed. Criteria for assessment provided in each unit outline are discussed and clarified for each assessment task.

Where appropriate, individual student, peer and lecturer assessment are implemented for specific tasks. In this way students are provided with opportunities for comprehensive assessments. Individual students have opportunities to discuss and negotiate some assessment tasks with me so that multiple intelligences and individual learning styles may be better utilised in meeting the requirements of designated tasks.

During the course of the units (2004–2005) students were given opportunities to engage in some specific soulful learning processes, not only individually, but also with their peers. One of these strategies was the ‘written conversation strategy’ in which students enrolled in the educational units, ‘teaching children with special needs’ and ‘teaching and classroom management’ were encouraged to write a personal response to the key questions relating to the substance of each unit, pass that response to an adjoining peer who would write a response to the initial student’s response and return it to the author for perusal. Two key objectives for the exercise were for students

- to engage in soulful learning processes by respectfully and soulfully responding to their peers’ written comments;
- to reflect upon possibilities for enhancing each of the units by writing about and sharing their aspirations for that unit and subsequently,
- to incorporate those perspectives into each unit as it evolved throughout the semester.

Key Question: What Does Teaching Children with Special Needs Mean for You?

It is believed that students responded honestly to the key question, ‘What does teaching children with special needs mean for you?’ Students’ responses were generally sufficiently comprehensive to provide a well-rounded overview of what *teaching students with special needs* means to them. For instance, one student in her response stressed the strengths, giftedness and value of each child and the need for teachers to engage in planning which will ultimately release each student’s individual gifts for the benefit of the whole class:

‘Teaching students with special needs means giving each child the opportunity to learn and grow. I think it involves accepting students as individuals and focussing on their strengths and positive qualities. Each student has their own value and their own gifts and through planning for each person, these qualities are shared and appreciated’.

Students’ Evaluation of The ‘Written Conversation Strategy’

Students identified a range of positive responses to the ‘written conversation strategy’. In particular, students emphasised the advantages to be gained in reflecting in their own time upon a specific issue and formulating ideas in a logical manner.

The sense of connectedness in having access to their peers' ideas and different perspectives was appreciated by several students. The open-ended 'written conversation strategy' was also seen to be of value in providing an opportunity for all students to participate in the strategy, especially those who like to write, those who have poor oral skills and, according to one student, the hearing impaired.

Samples of students' writing about their perceptions of special needs and their peers' responses to that writing provide insights into the depth of thought and challenge which were inherent in implementation of the written conversation. One student's response is indicative of several responses about the perceived essence of special needs:

'For me, this means a great deal of planning and recognising *each* student's individual needs. It means adapting learning programs and behavioural management strategies to encourage and build the class as a whole while encouraging the respective students in their development'.

Key Question: What Does Teaching and Classroom Management Mean for You?

Students' responses were generally sufficiently comprehensive to provide a well-rounded overview of what *teaching and classroom management means* to the students currently enrolled in the unit. One student's comprehensive response sums up adequately several of the attributes perceived by students to be critical components of holistic learning and effective teaching and classroom management.

'It means to me how I relate as a teacher to my students academically and socially and how I manage the role of teaching the KLAs {Key Learning Areas} and manage the classroom with respect to the students as a whole and as individuals with individual needs. Also the relationship with their parents, the community and staff and organising and managing all of these'.

Students identified a range of positive responses to the 'written conversation strategy'. For instance, several students expressed appreciation for the quiet, focused time in which they could reflect upon a well-thought out response to a question and could express their thoughts, without interruption. Having access to their peer's insights about the particular question, 'What does teaching and classroom management mean to you', provided opportunities for comparing and contrasting their original points of view with that of their peers and, as one student expressed it of being able to 'enhance our own thoughts and allow growth in our own understanding'. Another student valued 'the critical reflection followed by feedback from a peer which was great for us to look beyond our own thoughts and clarification of our own ideas.' Another student expressed satisfaction in being able to engage in a process that 'removes the obvious 'copying' joining in like sheep to others' opinion rather than original thought'.

One of the student's responses is indicative of several that focused on critical aspects of teaching and classroom management, namely earning respect from students and staff and ensuring that students reach their full potential by developing and implementing effective teaching and learning strategies:

'In the classroom, to me it (teaching and classroom management) means being an effective teacher/learner...gaining the respect of the students as an educator and friend, gaining the respect of fellow educators by:

- getting the most out of my class
- getting the most out of each student
- gaining new strategies to achieve these goals'

Another strategy deemed to enhance students' understanding of the multiple intelligences, in practice, is the Concept Map Strategy, a graphic medium for exploring the dimensions of a topic or theme. This strategy was implemented with Third Year primary education undergraduate students currently enrolled in teaching and classroom management units. Objectives for the strategy were

- to encourage students to discover possibilities for curriculum development, in particular, the Integrated Curriculum by using a medium which might allow them to express their ideas in a graphic format
- to prepare students for developing an Integrated Curriculum unit for a major assignment within the unit
- To evaluate use of the 'Concept Map' strategy

Analysis of Students' Responses

Analysis of students' responses revealed that the concept map was perceived by the majority of students to be helpful to their learning and provided a focus for the content of the unit. Most students indicated that they would consider using the concept map in other aspects of their learning and teaching. Students' written comments provided further insights into their perceived value of the concept map as a strategy for learning and/or providing focus for the unit's content.

Strategy for Learning

As a strategy for learning several students expressed appreciation for the concept map in terms of its brainstorming focus. One student stated, 'I was surprised where my ideas took me – to ideas and concepts that I would not have thought of if I had not focussed in this manner'. Other students indicated that they were able to come up with lots of ideas, to categorise information and to view ideas in an orderly fashion, to depict ideas and action plans visually, to see the relationship between Key Learning Activities (KLAs) and multiple intelligences, and to integrate aspects of the curriculum.

Focus for Content

As a focus for content in the unit students again emphasised the benefit of the strategy. In particular, students indicated that development of their individual concept maps enabled them to focus better on critical aspects of the curriculum, for example, the Key Learning Areas, multiple intelligences and students' unique learning styles, the components of curriculum, sequence and interrelatedness of curriculum components, a need for planning and for being creative in developing integrated curriculum programs designed to meet the needs of particular students. Comments made by three individual students are representative of the general comments about 'focus for content'. Student A, 'It {concept map} encouraged me to think about all different areas of the curriculum'. Student B, 'I needed to look at including or integrating 'the big idea' over many KLAs'. Student C, 'When creating a concept map, it made me think about what goes where and how it all relates to each other'.

Students indicated that creation of a personal concept map helped them to learn the language of the KLAs and to be able to use the vocabulary of curriculum. It also provided a vehicle for students to express themselves in an appropriate manner, for example, students wrote comments such as a) 'It helped me to be concise and specific'; b) 'I needed to research and write down concepts based on a topic'; c) 'It required a careful selection of words'; and d) 'I needed to think about how ideas could be logically grouped together'. Other students revealed appreciation for 'reading lots more and organising' whilst others mentioned the value of focusing on connectedness between concepts 'You had to make connections between the multiple intelligences and then about learning activities within those'.

Further Use of the Strategy in Other Aspects of Learning/Teaching

An overwhelming number of students indicated that they would use the concept map in other aspects of their learning and teaching. Students' comments illustrate their perceived value of the strategy a) 'It helps show the different aspects and activities involved in a topic'; b) 'Concept maps are great clarifiers of ideas/understandings'; c) 'It allows me to draw links and to think beyond the first thoughts'; d) 'It helps you to visualise everything in context. You can see what you are addressing and what you have left out and need to address'; and e) 'It gives you a great general overview of your plan at a glance'.

Students' concept maps and their subsequent comments made about their perceived value of the concept map strategy reveal that, in developing an integrated curriculum unit, students are becoming skilled in linking essential components of curriculum together. In particular, students demonstrated skill in networking essential curriculum components such as the Key Learning Areas, students' individual learning styles and multiple intelligences and, generally, developing a holistic approach to their own learning.

This chapter has been built on the premise that soulful learning is an essential component of any curriculum development. At the outset soulful learning was conceptualised and linked to both theories of multiple intelligences and to curriculum development. Three learning contexts embracing a class of primary school students, teachers in Catholic primary schools and tertiary students enrolled in the School of Education at a Catholic University formed the basis for this study. Within the three learning contexts identified dimensions of soulful learning were investigated. Findings from the study indicated that in each learning context identified there was and continues to be a need for students and teachers to plan, implement and evaluate rich holistic learning experiences in which multiple intelligences, including the emotional and spiritual intelligences are explored, nurtured and challenged.

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TEACHING SCRIPTURE IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Dr. Sally A. Liddy

Signadou Campus, Australian Catholic University

Introduction

Sacred texts are foundational to many religious traditions and their study indispensable to the content and process of religious education. Judaism and Christianity, to name just two great religious traditions, would not exist without their sacred texts that shape, preserve and transform their identities.

This chapter will focus on the teaching of the sacred texts of the Christian tradition, the Bible, from the perspective of the Catholic Christian community. The purpose of the chapter is to outline the Catholic Christian approach to the interpretation of the Bible as the Christian Scriptures, and teaching processes and strategies that educate students to become competent interpreters, able to hear and respond to the nourishing and challenging Word for their lives and times.

To focus on educating to understand the Bible as Scripture, is to aim to go further than merely ‘the understanding and appreciation of the texts in the Bible.’ (Ryan, 2001, p. v). It is to try to educate to more than what Welbourne (2003) recently referred to as ‘critical biblical literacy’, one ‘amongst a multiple of literacies’ in the school curriculum, although this is a large part of the task:

...Biblical literacy is shifting from the baseline of minimally accepted knowledge of facts comprehended literally to interpreting and communicating the literary genres of its texts. The role of biblical literacy is to break the code of the ancient texts to determine both the original and contemporary meanings of texts and interpret their value for contemporary readers (p. 1).

To understand the Bible as Scripture is to understand that through the biblical texts God speaks to us. Although expressed in genuinely human terms by human authors, the Bible understood as Scripture is God’s Word for us.

The chapter begins by distinguishing between the Bible and the Scriptures, and outlines the Catholic community's understanding of interpreting the Bible as Scripture. In the second part of the chapter, approaches to teaching for competent Scriptural interpretation are outlined, and a range of teaching strategies that can be used within these approaches are delineated.

What is the Bible?

The Christian Bible, from the Greek, *ta biblia*, means 'the books'. The Bible is a library of books of very different kinds, collected together in two large parts, traditionally called the Old and New Testaments. This naming of the parts of the Bible is the subject of much discussion, because it appears to imply that the New is superior to the Old, or that the Old is outdated or superseded by the New. Renaming the parts of the Bible as Hebrew and Christian Scriptures is sometimes used, or First and Second Testaments, but each naming has its own particular difficulty. In this chapter the conventional way of the naming the two parts of the Bible will be followed, recognising that the Catholic Christian community understands the Old Testament to be fully part of its Sacred Scriptures.

Jews and Protestant Christians recognise forty books in the Old Testament, Catholic Christians recognise six additional books. These are called 'apocryphal' by Jews and Protestant Christians, and 'deutero-canonical' by Catholic Christians. Both Protestant and Catholic Christians recognise twenty-seven books in the New Testament.

For most of us the Bible is a foreign set of books requiring a great deal of skilled interpretation. The original languages in which the books were written are Hebrew and Greek, and their setting within cultures and worldviews often seem unrelated to our modern ones. The Bible also contains a rich variety of literary types or genres, many no longer used in modern literature or cultural settings. The Old Testament is made up of history, legal texts, essays, drama, diaries, narratives, prayers, visions, itineraries, family trees, songs, hymns, love poems, letters, sermons, theological articles, prophetic oracles, proverbs and myth. In the New Testament are Gospels containing, among other things, parables, healing stories, narratives, miracles, as well as Letters, and apocalyptic material.

Biblical writings are not transcripts or verbatim reports of historical events, but religious reflections on individual and community experience that one generation passed down to another, for a long time in oral form. Some of the earliest writings in The Old Testament are poetic fragments, such as Miriam's song in Exodus 15, composed about 1300 BCE. Some of the last writing in the New Testament, 2 Peter, can be dated about 125 CE. Thus the contents of the Bible cover a period of nearly 1500 years and we stand almost 3000 years from most of these writings. We do not have any original manuscripts of the biblical texts, but we do have very old copies, some dating from the first century.

The authors of the biblical texts varied enormously in their religious, cultural, economic, social and political background, and the contexts and situations in which

they collected and recorded the textual material differed greatly. In addition, most of the texts originated in oral form and were only later committed to writing. Often written texts were only placed together in the Bible at a much later time in their history. Many of the texts are not the work of one author, but compilations that reflect community traditions (Riches, 2000).

Vatican II's 1965 Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, captures the development of the Gospels of the New Testament in this way:

The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form, others they synthesised or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches, the while sustaining the form of preaching, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus. #19 (Flannery, 1988).

What is Scripture?

The Bible can be considered in a number of ways: as a collection of interesting, ancient works of religious literature; as 'classic' texts, having an enduring value as cultural artefacts; or, to a community of religious faith, as Scriptures. When the term Scriptures is used of the books of the Bible it means that they are accepted by the Christian community as authentic witness to, and interpretation of, Christianity's foundation religious experiences and understood as inspired, inerrant, and Word of God. These three characteristics of biblical texts understood as Scripture demand much further explanation.

Inspired

The word 'inspiration' is derived from the Latin that means 'breathe into.' 'Inspiration is the word Christians have given to name their conviction that the Scripture is 'God-breathed,' that the texts themselves, or at least their religious content, come from some special form of influence by God's Spirit' (Gaillardetz, 2003, p. 16.) The Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) describes its understanding of inspiration in terms of the original inspiration of the human authors in composing the text and the continuing dynamism of the text when read today 'under the influence of the Holy Spirit' (1993, p. 85).

Gaillardetz (2003) labels this contemporary Catholic approach to the understanding of inspiration as 'social inspiration' (p. 20) Catholic understanding is to situate God's inspiration within the life of the Spirit-filled communities within which the texts arose, texts that have come down to us in a multi-stage process of development, and also within the Spirit-filled community receiving the text in its own time. Inspiration is present as a charism of the Spirit, active within all the complex human interactions around which the texts arose, and with which it is carried and responded to today.

Inspiration is a two part process: the author is inspired by the Holy Spirit in the act of writing and secondly, the Spirit-filled community acknowledges that the work is inspired and gives it due respect. The inspired writer does not literally hear the voice of God or angels, see visions or write in a trance. For example, the author of Luke's gospel tells us in the prologue that he made every human effort to investigate the truth about Jesus. (Lk 1:3).

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, affirms this sense of the inspiration of the text, written under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The human authors made full use of their own powers and abilities, under the 'prompting of the holy Spirit' # 11 (Flannery, 1988).

God is the ground and source of all human creativity. God is the source of life and freedom that makes it possible for a human person to exercise their freedom. Applied to our understanding of divine inspiration, this suggests that the influence of the Holy Spirit on the early Biblical community need not be set off against their created, historically and culturally circumscribed freedom. Rather, inspiration can be understood as God's revealing what God wishes 'for the sake of our salvation' precisely through the very real limitations and even biases of the biblical authors and their communities (Gaillardetz, 2003, p. 25).

Inerrant

Inerrancy does not mean that the Scripture does not contain any errors whatsoever, but that, as a whole, it does not lead to error in our relationship with God. In *Dei Verbum* the Vatican Council notes:

Since, therefore, all that the inspired authors, or sacred writers, affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of scripture, firmly, and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred scriptures. #11 (Flannery, 1988).

The truth taught 'without error' in the Scripture is a truth that is 'for the sake of our salvation.' This is not a claim for total Scriptural inerrancy. The Scripture contains errors of scientific and historical fact.

The Vatican Council's understanding was that inspiration and inerrancy be viewed from the perspective of God's redeeming and liberating purpose. Scripture is inspired, not with scientific or historical accuracy, but with a view to communicating the outreaching love of God. There is human error and limitation in the sacred texts. However, 'The scientific and historical framework of biblical texts is to be read as a medium for the communication of God's offer of salvation' (Gaillardetz, 2003, p. 23).

Word of God

The Scriptures, in Catholic Christian understanding are not the literal ‘words of God,’ they are not spiritual dictation. The faith affirmation, *Word of God*, used for the Scriptures means that these texts are a means for the expression and communication of the relationship of God towards human beings (Carmody, 2004, p. 3). As Schneiders points out: ‘The expression ‘word of God’ is a metaphor in Catholic Christian understanding. God is infinite Spirit, and we do not understand God to have spoken, literally, words that have been recorded in the Scriptures’ (1991, p. 29) Rather, Schneiders describes the metaphoric phrase Word of God as laden with meaning, with an ‘endless reservoir of significance’. The Scripture is not literally God’s discourse, but a much richer, personal reality. The Catholic community regards the Scriptures ‘as a privileged locus of divine self-revelation which is most readily understood according to the model of human self-revelation in language’ (Schneiders, 1991, p. 39). Scripture is therefore, a living Word of God, not just for the Christian communities in the past who gave them birth, but also for Christian communities today.

God’s Word, God’s self-communication, God’s revelation, is disclosed in the Scriptures, but we appropriate it only through the hard work of critical and communal interpretation.

Interpreting the Bible as Scripture

For many centuries prior to Vatican II, Catholic Christians understood that the Scripture contained accurate accounts and reports of events communicating theological truths about the world, God, and humankind. It was interpreted literally and spiritually, by those who had been educated to do so, often in the light of later church teachings and dogma. The Scripture was not a familiar book of the faith community. It was not a source of daily prayer and inspiration. It was truly a foreign book.

In the eighteenth century, biblical scholars became aware of many contradictions in the Scripture. For example, in the Old Testament there are two stories of creation; conflicting accounts of the story of the flood, two versions of the Decalogue, two perspectives of the history of the monarchy, two versions of Saul’s first encounter with David in his court (Carmody, 2004, p. 5). These scholars began to ask historical and literary questions about the Scripture and its texts. Was Moses really the author of Pentateuch? How are the synoptic Gospels, which contain so much common material, related? Contemporary biblical scholarship began with such questions, but it was almost two centuries before the Catholic Church encouraged critical biblical study, and that historical and literary questions should be asked of the Bible (Stead, 1996). Our grandparents would tell us that the Scripture was more a family keepsake or decoration than a source for daily reflection.

In 1893, Pope Leo XIII wrote the first modern encyclical offering specific directives for the Catholic approach to Scripture. *Providentissimus Deus*, A Most

Provident God, tried to give firm direction to Catholic scholars on how to deal properly with the Scripture at a time when scientific approaches to it were beginning to blossom. Fifty years later, in 1943, Pope Pius XII wrote the ground breaking *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, Inspired by the Divine Spirit, which gave Catholic biblical scholars much needed impetus to use all the tools then available for the scientific study of the Scripture. It is considered by many as the first full Catholic endorsement of modern biblical scholarship.

Fifty years later, in November 1993, the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) published a remarkable document on the interpretation of the Scripture titled *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (IBC). In the opinion of Witherup: 'With the publication of the present PBC document, Catholic biblical scholarship, no longer in its infancy, takes a mature adult stance toward biblical scholarship' (1994, p. 336). IBC provides the most contemporary guidelines for the various ways in which Catholics can find genuine enrichment in interpreting and reflecting on the Scripture today.

IBC gives a clear indication of how important biblical scholarship is in helping members of the Catholic Christian community use the Scriptures, as well as for the work of preaching, teaching, evangelisation and ecumenical dialogue. Stead (1996, p. 100) points out that the PBC considered critical study of the Scripture so essential to the development of biblical faith that it defined one of the goals of religious education as 'initiation into a correct understanding and fruitful reading of the Bible.'

The long, first part of IBC explains the variety of methods used for biblical study and evaluates them. It recommends the historical-critical method, and, in addition, the newer methods of narrative, rhetorical, and semiotic analysis, for making the Scripture more accessible for readers today. IBC emphasises this plurality of methods for the interpretation of Scripture and affirms their viability as interpretative methods in the Church today.

Until very recently *the* approach to biblical interpretation was a group of approaches called the *historical-critical method*. This method sought to understand the full meaning of the text by identifying: the literary or oral sources the editor drew on to compose the text (*source criticism*); the literary forms of these sources in which the meaning is expressed (*form criticism*); and the work of the editor in shaping these sources into a particular theological perspective (*redaction criticism*). This method is called '*diachronic*' because it seeks out the vertical layers of development underlying the text. But as Osiek observes about the historical critical method 'its weakness has been the inability of the method itself to make meaningful contacts with the contemporary lives of readers' (Osiek, 1988, p. 40). New approaches to interpretation have drawn from the methods of the social sciences and the study of literature to bridge this gap. They are referred to as '*synchronic*' because they look for the literary connections, which appear throughout the text in its present form, binding it together as a literary whole. The *social-scientific approach* explores how the cultural context behind the text differs from our own. *Literary or rhetorical criticism* focuses on the text as a coherent whole and explores characters, plot,

and story to see how theology and life experience are conveyed to us through the text. After a thorough review of all these varieties of critical biblical tools the Commission emphasises the need for multiple methods of study of the texts to gain a true understanding of the meaning of the text.

In the second part of the document the PBC discusses the complexities of hermeneutical theories and the most difficult question of explaining how the Bible is 'inspired Scripture.' As previously referred to, the Commission does so in terms of the original inspiration of the human authors in composing the text and the continuing dynamism of the text when read today 'under the influence of the Holy Spirit' (1993, p. 85).

The third part of the document focuses on the principles of Catholic biblical interpretation. What characterises Catholic biblical interpretation is not any particular scientific method but that it takes place 'within the living tradition of the church' (1993, p. 88). The PBC reminds us that there is no *Catholic* method of scriptural interpretation. What is Catholic is the stress on the communal, historical character of God's revelation. It is a communal, mediated experience that is being communicated to us in our day.

The final part of the IBC warns that exegetes do not have the monopoly on biblical interpretation, and that in the past the use of the historical critical method of interpretation alone was not helpful in communicating the living Word of God for the community today. It was 'deficient from the point of view of Faith' (1993, p. 32). Rather, it emphasises that the whole church 'receives the Bible as Word of God, addressed both to itself and to the entire world at the present time... actualising and inculturating the Biblical message...(1993, p. 117). In this sense, interpretation requires both a careful reading of the text and an application that speaks to the contemporary world. Interpretation works in two directions. The Scripture contains meanings from its own historical context, but our act of interpretation adds a dimension to the interpretation, under the Spirit's guidance, that adapts the meaning of God's Word to our own circumstances.

Johnson draws this complexity regarding methods of Scriptural interpretation together in what he calls an 'interpretative model' (1999, p. 4). Johnson understands a model to be a 'paradigm within which the data appropriate to a discipline make sense' (1999, p. 4). In the case of Scriptural interpretation, such a model allows for the anthropological, historical, literary, and religious dimensions of the texts to be maintained in their integrity. The anthropological dimension takes the writings seriously as fully human productions. The Scriptures are fully human writings, and intrinsic to being human are religious experiences and ideas. The historical dimension encourages us to read the Scriptural texts in their settings in the Mediterranean world. The time and place of writing has conditioned the texts. The settings and intentions of their authors are very significant too. The literary dimension draws our attention to the writings as literary compositions within a canon of other writings. Attention must be paid to genre, and to the literary conventions operating when the writings were composed. The religious dimension draws our attention to these texts as first and foremost religious writings, not theological treatises but

theology. They work out the implications of religious experience and conviction for life in the community and world. '... they claim to be speaking about life as related to God. Their subject matter concerns what it means to be human in the light of faith...' (Johnson, 1999, p. 7).

The Three Worlds of the Text

With this understanding of Scriptural interpretation as background, and drawing on the work of the linguistic philosopher Gadamer (1975) many Scripture scholars describe contemporary Catholic biblical interpretation in terms of 'three loci of meaning'... 'three different players who contribute to the meaning of the text' (Carmody, 2004, p. 10). Shea (1984) describes these in terms of 'approaches' to understanding the text: a 'behind-the-text' approach which focuses on an historical sense of the text; a 'within-the-text' approach which uses literary analysis of the text; and an 'in-front-of-the-text' approach which uses imagination to relate the text to life. Schneiders (1991) uses the language of three 'worlds', namely, the world 'behind the text', the world 'of the text' and the world 'before the text'. Bergant (1992, p. 33) calls these the worlds 'out of which the text grew'; the world 'created by the text itself'; and the world 'of the reader'. Hauer and Young (1994) name them the historical world, the literary world and the contemporary world of the text.

The search for meaning in the *world behind the text* is the search to discover as much as possible about the context in which the text was created and accepted. Who authored the text? What was the author's social, historical and religious world? To whom is the text addressed? Who are the people and events referred to in the text? What did particular words, images or expressions mean at the time when the text was written?

The search for meaning in the *world of the text* leads us to consider the characteristics of the text that give it power to continue to communicate meaning after it has been written. What is the text-type or genre of the text? What techniques are characteristic of that genre and how are they deployed in this instance? What are the ways the author attempts to influence feelings, ideas and expectations in the text?

In the search for meaning in the *world in front of the text*, readers recognise that they bring a world of experience and meaning-making to the text that provides a lens through which the text is read. In the ideal situation, the text is not distorted to make it mean what the reader intends, but the text becomes a dialogue partner. Readers bring their concerns and experiences to the text and allow it to become part of ongoing reflection and discernment.

Approaches to Teaching the Bible as Scripture

This threefold locus of meaning in approaching Scriptural interpretation gives us the foundational elements for a process to teach Scripture in Religious Education. I will refer to four of these in detail. The basic approach as a process is very similar, but each has some unique and helpful characteristics.

Etienne Charpentier (1982): The Tool Box

An outline of a process to teach Scriptural interpretation suitable for students of Religious Education is found in Charpentier's *How to read the Old Testament* (1982). He called the three-part process of interpretation a 'tool box'. In a summary outline it is as follows:

First Contact:

- Read the text and note your reactions:
- What strikes you?
- What do you like?
- What amazes you?
- What raises questions?

Studying the Text:

- With the help of a Commentary, explore the dynamics in the text itself.
- What happens?
- Explore the text as part of a larger whole in which it is placed.
- Research the age, situation, genre and background to the text.

Reading the Text.

- Read the text again.
- What does it say to you?
- How does it help you live?

Since the publication of 'the tool box' process, Australian religious educators have been particularly well served by two authors offering similar approaches to teaching Scripture, which are informed by contemporary biblical scholarship, an understanding of inspiration, the role of the Scriptures in the believing community and the best of contemporary educational strategies.

Barbara Stead (1994): KITE

Stead's KITE approach is a four-part process: Know the Text; Inspire the Imagination, Translate to Life, Express the Heart (1994). This process was the result of Stead's experience as a religious educator, her training in biblical scholarship and her doctoral research into the teaching of Scripture in Catholic schools.

Know the Text:

- Explore the genre of the text; the context in which it was written; the audience, people, groups and customs referred to in the text.

Inspire the Imagination:

- Help the students engage imaginatively with text.

Translate to Life:

- What is the relevance of the text to our lives?
- What is the good news of salvation in this text?
- What is the challenge to repentance in this text?

Express the Heart:

- Use the text as a focus for ritual and prayer.

Margaret Carswell (2001): The Composite Model

Carswell, an experienced religious educator and student of Stead, built on her work and that of Berryman (1991) Gobbel (1986) and Bastide (1987) to formulate a model for teaching Scripture which she calls *The Composite Model* (Carswell, 2001, p. 10). *The Composite Model* is a sequential three-stage process: Prepare to hear the Word; Hear and Encounter the Word; and Respond to the Word.

Prepare to hear the Word:

- The teacher prepares the students to meet the text by helping them understand the social, cultural and religious events and practices reflecting in the text.

Hear and encounter the Word:

- In this stage students are given the opportunity to feel and own the text, interact with it, studying the story, plot, text type, characters etc. and considering their personal reaction to it.

Respond to the Word:

- In this concluding part of the process students are encouraged to express their insights or response to the text.

Steve Mueller (1999): The ABCs of Bible Reading

In the American context, Mueller describes a technique he has developed over many years of teaching adults in his wonderful introductory text to reading and interpreting Scripture *Reading the Bible: a Catholic view* (1999). He calls the process *The ABCs of Bible Reading* (1999, p. 188). This process is described as three basic steps: approaching the text; breaking open the text; connecting the text to our life:

Approaching the Text:

- Examine the assumptions we have about the text and how to interpret it. Become aware of the personal experience, needs, and expectations we bring to our reading of the text.

Breaking Open the Text.

- Begin by paying close attention to what the text says. Consult a Bible dictionary. Using biblical commentaries and the work of biblical scholars try to determine what the text meant to its author and first audience.

Connecting the Text to our Life.

- Make the text our own so that it changes us. Let its ideas and values become ours. There is never just one meaning in any text.

These pedagogical processes for teaching Scripture are very similar and are based on a contemporary Catholic approach to Scriptural interpretation. The best contemporary teaching strategies and resources can also be employed in the different stages of the process. It is not possible in this chapter to deal adequately with the enormous range of strategies and materials available today to support the teaching of Scripture in religious education. However, some key resources will be described.

Teaching Scripture

Religious Educators have available to them a rich variety of texts that provide them with contemporary and accessible material for their own background for teaching Scripture well and material for their students to use to background research on Scriptural texts. Carmody's *Reading the Bible: A study guide* (2003) uses the 'three worlds' approach to interpreting the Scriptural text to survey the major parts of the Bible. Ryan's *Reading the Bible* (2003) is also an excellent introductory text.

Although it doesn't deal with specific texts in the Scriptures, Mueller's *The Seeker's Guide to Reading the Bible: a Catholic View* (1999) is a clear and readable text for introducing adult learners to an understanding of the nature of the Scripture and an approach to interpreting it.

Charles Singer and Albert Hari (1993; 1995; 1997) have published an excellent set of texts for school-age students dealing with the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. Accompanying the text from Scripture is: background material situating the text in its historical and cultural setting; commentary on the text itself; and material that helps school students think about the relevance of the text and use the text for prayer.

Best Teaching Practice

In Australia, Ryan is providing religious educators with useful resources that incorporate best teaching practice with Biblical material to help educate students about the Bible. His text, *Teaching the Bible*, is designed to assist educators with 'background information, teaching ideas and classroom materials for use in teaching the Bible' as literature. (Ryan, 2001, p. iv). In this approach, Ryan draws on contemporary teaching/learning strategies employed in other key learning areas in the curriculum and applies them to teaching about the Bible. For example Ryan draws on

co-operative learning strategies; strategies informed by Gardiner's work on multiple intelligences and Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives; strategies derived from the work of De Bono; and from other curriculum areas such as Music, Drama and English education, to name only a few, confirming his belief that 'the classroom religion program has the same shape and flow as other curriculum areas...' (Ryan, 2001, p. iv). In his latest set of texts for Primary Religious Education, *Expressions* (Ryan, 2003), Ryan shows how relevant this range of strategies is not only to teaching the Bible but also to the entire Religious Education curriculum.

Using Atlases, Encyclopaedias, Bible Handbooks and Commentaries for Teaching Scripture

There is a large range of very useful resources in this category, for example dictionaries, atlases, and encyclopaedias. From the rich variety of excellent biblical commentaries available, *The Collegeville Bible Commentary* (1992) is the most comprehensible for the older school student.

The Lion Handbook to the Bible (3rd ed.) (Alexander & Alexander, 1999) and *The Complete Bible Handbook* (Bowker, 1999) are excellent one volume guides that bring together geography, history, culture, and textual commentary, drawing on contemporary scholarship and archaeology to provide comprehensive background to the Scriptures.

Perego's *Interdisciplinary Atlas of the Bible* (1999) introduces the biblical texts in terms of their historical setting, related archaeological findings, social background and geography. In addition, reflections from patristic, rabbinic and exegetical traditions related to the text are included.

Using Drama for Teaching Scripture

Rina Wintour offers educators creative ways to break open the Scriptures, using drama-related techniques such as liquid pictures, chorus plays, and echo mimes, as well as personal reflections on Scripture passages that can be used as guided meditations (2000; 2002; 2004). Liquid pictures 'is a form of drama which allows a story to be presented in a flowing or liquid manner (2000, p. 3). Chorus plays 'present Scriptural stories in a form of a play with both individual characters and a chorus' (2000, p. 3). An echo mime combines the Scripture story rewritten in simple statements with an accompanying action performed by a leader, which is the repeated or echoed by the whole group. Wintour not only describes these techniques but also provides a range of examples that can be used with students, and as templates for the creation of new examples.

Using Story and Song for Teaching Scripture

One definition of story is that it is 'the telling of significant actions of characters over time' (Taylor, 1996, p. 15) Story is a very powerful literary genre and Scripture itself contains many different types of stories, for example, the myths in Genesis; the

sagas in Exodus, the legends in 1 Samuel and the parables in the synoptic Gospels. Story draws us into the experience of another, it illustrates moral choices and life values, and it illustrates the living out of religious truths. Story can evoke an emotional response, and encourage the use of the imagination. It illustrates the ways others make meaning from experience. Story can be affirming and supporting of personal experience or it can challenge that experience.

Using story is also a very powerful teaching strategy. In teaching Scripture to children it is very helpful to have a retelling of Scripture stories in a form which remains true to the meaning of the original Scriptural text, yet presents the story in a vivid and imaginative way. Children are initially more receptive to hearing the Scripture story in this way before they are introduced to the text itself. One such collection of stories based on the Scripture is Hartman's (1995) *The Lion Storyteller Bible*.

Another way to use story to teach Scripture is to read or tell contemporary stories which carry meaning analogous to the older Scripture stories, whose meaning it may be more difficult to grasp. Margaret Wild's *Fox* (2000), for example, with its themes of betrayal of trust, repentance and faithful love, has parallels with themes from, for example, the Prophet Hosea or Jesus' parable of the Lost Sons.

Music and song is an important and enjoyable vehicle for learning. In the context of teaching Scripture, it is often Scripture passages which provide the source material for contemporary liturgical musicians, for example, David Haas, Marty Haugen, Michael Joncas, Bernadette Farrell, The Iona Community, Monica Brown, and John Burland, to name just a few. Music is infectious and involving, and songs based on the Scripture text, like good stories, are very useful vehicles for teaching.

Paule Freeburg and Christopher Walker (1994; 1999) have two collections of New Testament stories, and their accompanying songs, suitable for teaching children the Scripture texts. The stories can be read or listened to from the accompanying tapes. The songs have been written in various styles from classical to pop and folk. Some of these retell the Gospel story, others take an idea from the story and relate to the children's life and experience.

Using Film for Teaching Scripture

Films are a most influential part of our contemporary culture, and, like music, could usefully be included in both the content and teaching of religious education. John Paul II has said of them: 'The cinema can become... a place of reflection, a call to values, an invitation to dialogue and communion...' (1999). Like stories, movies have the capacity to illuminate human experience and so open us to understandings of ourself and others by using its capacity to involve us emotionally.

Malone and Pacatte (2001; 2002; 2003) have appreciated the capacity of film to explore spiritual meaning, and therefore, in the context of the Scriptures, to lead to a keener understanding of the text. They have produced a three-volume collection of movies that dialogue thematically with the Cycle of Scripture readings in the

Sunday Lectionary. Their hope is that this might be an educational tool, challenging people to engage in the conversation between faith and culture.

Goldburg (2001, p. 126) points out that many students have gained much of their knowledge of the Scriptures from films. 'Rather than merely put them aside as dated and boring teachers might use selected segments of these films as yet another way of studying the biblical text' (2001, p. 126). Film provides images and multiple interpretations of text, particularly the Jesus story, which can provide a useful focus to exploring the text. Learning the language of film and learning to understand the socio-cultural, political, and cultural influences on film can help students see these influences at work in the Scriptures also, and therefore aid critical understanding (Goldburg, 2004).

Using Art for Teaching Scripture

Many artists have insights into and experiences of meaning or significance about the Scriptures and can express this through the avenue of form, using, for example, paint, stone, woven materials, metal, or glass. The expression may be an emotional response or intellectual insight. It may be a celebration of joy or an expression of pain and questioning. The work of some artists provides us with opportunities to reflect on the Scriptures, our own life and our responses. Art has great power to represent the experience that lies behind the Scripture text and to represent responses to those experiences.

Art facilitates the teaching of Scripture in at least five ways: it illustrates stories and ideas in Scripture; it communicates meaning from the text in ways that words cannot; it can touch the emotions in powerful ways; it can use the text to create a focus for prayer and reflection; and, finally, it can teach by suggesting a new perspective, a new way of looking at the text.

The three volume work *Imaging the word: An arts and lectionary resource* (Lawrence, 1994; Blain, 1995; 1996) employs many forms of the arts, particularly visual art and photography to break open the Scripture for the three yearly Sunday lectionary cycle and is a bountiful source of works of art that draw their inspiration from the Scriptural text as well as focusing on insight or experience suggested from the Scriptures.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the Catholic Christian approach to the interpretation of the Bible as Scripture, the living Word of God. It has outlined three loci that contribute to the meaning of the Scriptural text, its historical, literary and human dimensions. Based on this model of interpretation, approaches to teaching Scriptural interpretation have been outlined and a wide range of teaching strategies and resources that can be used within these approaches have been described.

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THE THEATRE OF LEARNING: DEVELOPING SPIRITUALITY THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL AND ACTIVE TECHNIQUES WHICH ALSO PROMOTE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Sue Phillips

Bognor Regis Community College, Southern England

Background

In England, school inspectors have frequently reported that Religious Education (RE) is the least popular subject in the curriculum; pupils have been known to say it is boring and irrelevant. This could be because RE often fails to address the pupils' own spirituality. If the content is always about *other* people and *other* religions, it usually fails to offer much to a young person who is searching for the meaning and purpose of his/her *own* existence? Indeed, if the focus continues to be always about people who share a world view based on metaphysical constructs that not only have little to do with the student's own world but something they tend to, quite literally, perceive as *nonsense*, then the subject RE will remain boring, irrelevant and of little effect.

Given this context, the focus for this chapter is a particular learning approach which contains six techniques that can be applied to the planning and delivery of any RE lesson on any topic to pupils at any age group. These techniques, published in a series of teacher resource files are now being used successfully by many schools in Britain where teachers use them to develop their own individual lessons for their own programmes of study. Anecdotal evidence suggest that they motivate and engage the children, improve their academic performance, and because they are about the whole person who is teaching the whole child, this approach develops the spirituality and increases the satisfaction of teaching and learning for both teachers and pupils.

This approach makes RE make sense because it develops the children's own spirituality. It uses their growing understanding as a bridge to help them understand the spirituality of others. It uses their awareness of their own emotions and their need to express themselves symbolically and ritually to help them understand the rituals and symbols of the people in the traditions they are studying. It makes RE make sense, precisely because the pupils recognise that they are not much different to others, that we are all connected.

There is much contemporary literature that recognises that spirituality is older than most religious traditions, beyond race, culture and time (for instance Ó Murchú, 1997; 2000), that it is universal and a fundamental aspect of the human being (for instance Hay & Nye, 1998), whether or not individuals actually profess to having a belief in a divine being. More recently, there has been some discussion amongst health professionals about the role of spirituality in the health and wellbeing of individuals that we recognise it in ourselves and others, especially our children and that we should nurture it and allow it to express itself.

While it has been difficult to define spirituality and to recognise it when it appears in the classroom, it is what I call *the inside bits*. Most of my pupils have recognised what I meant by this description, and they have responded when we have directed our work towards it. As a term for use in the classroom it has resonance, meaning and power

In Religious Education we have been preoccupied for so long with what other people *do*. The problem is that this is the end product, the outward expression of their spirituality, their inside bits. It is often a cultural expression of inner spirituality which comes from a different period of time, expressed in myth and symbol which mystify the young because those myths and symbols have lost some of their meaning when they have been transferred to different cultures in contemporary times. Thereby, they have lost a certain mystery and power. That is why RE so often fails to engage our young people; it has little meaning and relevance for them.

One instance that captures this situation aptly is when the story of the Temptations of Jesus is presented to secular youngsters, for them it is quite literally nonsense. However, if we examine its theme, that is, what it is about, we find that it reflects the great cosmic battle between good and evil. This is, indeed, something that may capture the imagination and interest of our pupils. The imagination of young people and adults alike is as hungry as ever for myths and symbols that help them continue to solve puzzles and problems. A generation ago, this theme was portrayed in popular culture in the Western. In literature it emerges in the crime novel and in contemporary television programs and the movies, we frequently get caught up in similar themes in the stories of science fiction.

If you open a Bible in class and begin to read the story of the temptation of Jesus by Satan, the pupil's eyes will glaze over and someone will mutter, 'The devil doesn't exist, this story isn't true. It didn't happen'. Analogically though, when Darth Vader in George Lucas' Star Wars revealed himself as the father of Luke Skywalker in their battle on Cloud City and said, 'Come and join me. We can overthrow the Emperor and rule the galaxy together as father and son!', Luke

replies, 'No, I'll never join you' and he throws himself into space rather than be corrupted. This is usually riveting stuff for cinema audiences, particularly younger audiences. Certainly, the offer was perceived to be a tempting one and Luke's response in the choice that he made was a particularly difficult one since there had been no promises that he would be saved if he cast himself off the temple or Cloud City but no one muttered, 'How silly! Darth Vader doesn't exist!'

I use the above analogy to illustrate why mainstream religious traditions are in crisis, today, particularly in the matter of really engaging the hearts of our young. Young people are no longer prepared to go through the motions that lead up paths that they consider meaningless and irrelevant. Instead, they are still searching for spiritual nurturing and they perceive RE or their own tradition as the avenue where they should find this nurturing but, clearly, it is not happening for them.

If we plan our religious education by aiming for the basic spiritual concept that the young people and the believers have in common, that is, their sense of connectedness to one another, the world and the cosmos, then we will develop children's spirituality and enable them to understand people who are different to themselves.

Let us look at this a little more closely. Religion comes from a root meaning to connect. This is such a basic but deeply profound concept. When we get it right in the classroom we do so because what we did is fundamentally and absolutely about connection—with each other, with the universe and all that is in it—and with the 'Other', however this may be perceived and understood. At the heart of it all lies the child's connection with its own inner self and then with the selves of its classmates. It should then lead to moral, social and empathetic connections with those outside the child's immediate circle or context, with people whose beliefs and practices and worldview are quite different from their own. The underlying reason that allows them to do this is that they can develop an awareness or understanding that we are not different from one another; that at some level, we are all the same.

One student's voice that described her learning came at the end of the first year that I had been experimenting with these methods. The pupils and I were discussing the value or otherwise, of the new ways in which we were beginning to learn together and she said:

After these lessons I feel I can go into any family, anywhere in the world and take part in their festivals and celebrations. Even if I had never studied their religion I feel that I would be able to understand why it is important to them.

I have found that in developing these techniques, RE has become a powerful, transforming experience in which pupils reflect on and develop their inner lives. They share and express this with the rest of the class to whom they may bond in a way not evident in their other classes; 'My RE family' is the term one pupil used to refer to her class.

The other positive outcome is that it has also led to transformed behaviour, motivation and recruitment to voluntary examination classes and raised the status of RE in the eyes of parents and staff. Finally, it has raised the quality of written work

and examination success. Pupils write *after* they have learned through the experience of an affecting multi sensory experience. Possibly the most apt description of this process was offered by another pupil:

In other lessons, where you learn from a book, it all goes straight over your head. You can only remember it for an exam if you revise it, but what happens in RE is a part of your life. It is a memory. You never forget it.

The Theatre of Earning Approach

The Theatre of learning is a process, not a place and in the tale of its evolution lies its rationale. The central aim is to engage our pupils with their own spirituality and that of others.

The Six Techniques

My efforts to achieve the central aim led me to the discovery of six important techniques which have transformed the way I teach and led me to believe that spirituality is a universal and essential component of every human being whether they belong to a religious tradition or not and irrespective of any belief in a divine being or afterlife. These six techniques are:

- Working in circles for trust building exercises and listening skills. These are a powerful trust building tool which help pupils empathise with people quite different from themselves.
- Working in a multi-sensory environment in which music, scent, plants, flowers and subdued lighting play an important part;
- Religion neutral exercises which parallel the rituals and ceremonies of the traditions the pupils are learning;
- Participatory symbols which enable pupils to experience that ritual and liturgy are very powerful and enable believers to feel changed;
- Creating a concrete platform from which to understand abstract concepts using stories and concept building exercises;
- Hitting the spiritual target by preparing lessons which link the child's own spirituality to that of the tradition being studied.

These are combined, expressed and experienced in *re enactment* and working in this way develops the children's own spirituality, enables them to understand and empathise with the spirituality of others - and makes RE make sense.

These techniques also help to develop ten aspects of universal spirituality. They suggest that all human beings have a need

- To celebrate
- To mark significant moments
- To tell their story

- To grieve and to mourn
- To connect with the past
- To feel part of a community
- To make significant journeys
- To express themselves symbolically
- To see purpose and meaning to their lives
- To ask ultimate questions

These are the expressions of a universal spirituality that underlies all religious traditions; Indeed, they express the spiritual core of everyone, whether they belong to a religious tradition or not.

The Process

This learning approach has worked well with classes of mixed ability where pupils with exceptionally high ability who are taught along side those with considerable learning difficulties. Some of the problems were literacy or behaviour related and sometimes both problems were evident in particular cases. We had pupils from our special unit for dyslexic children and some from our behaviour support unit. Some of the pupils had help for anger management and spent a significant time in other lessons being disruptive, confrontational or being asked to leave.

The basic structure for the curriculum approach had four areas. Three of these derived from the usual requirements of the GCSE: knowledge, understanding and evaluation. However, we added a fourth area: feelings, and this aspect is the single element that changed the way we were teaching, the inclusion of *feelings* into the planning. It seems obvious that, ultimately, religion is about feelings. In its ideal form it is about making people feel good and yet, traditional classroom RE focused on content and cognitive learning with little attention given to the emotive issues that were an essential part of any religious tradition.

An example of how feelings may be incorporated into the learning process in an RE topic can be seen in the study of the Torah. Once we had decided on the content we reflected on the question: How do Jews *feel* about the Torah? And this prompted a further question: How can we enable the children to get into *those* feelings and really relate to how those people felt?

We decided to invite each pupil to bring in, or talk about, *their* most special object in class. We thought that we might be able to create a link between those feelings and the feelings people have about their holy books. We included the pupils in the discussion of this idea and asked them what they thought. They were keen to try this approach and a few pupils said they could think of things that they would be prepared to talk about. We had been working together for about a month. They were beginning to relax a little with each other but it was still a big risk for them.

Our expectations were that we would be given a few descriptions, maybe a couple of things brought in from home, a photo of a pet. Instead, what happened in the class far exceeded our expectations. We prepared the room with a small display of photographs and artefacts to create an atmosphere and I lit a candle. As the class came in there was an air of expectation. We agreed that this was going to be a special time because we were going to talk about ourselves so we needed to remember the rules of the circle, as we had in lower school: Listen when someone is speaking; Make eye contact and there were to be no 'put downs'.

The topic for the lesson was introduced with some attention being given to the special feeling that the Torah evoked. The pupils were told two stories from the holocaust, illustrating the devotion of two men to the Torah.

The pupils then began to share their own special objects. Almost every object was associated with loss. For one, it was a photo of her parents before they separated, for another, a letter from a friend who had moved away. Then there was a card from a parent no longer in touch; a ring passed down the family, not sad, but giving the child a sense of continuity. One was about celebration, pride and self-esteem: a necklace, a gift for winning an important race.

The atmosphere in the room became powerful. When the round had finished a number of students had opted not to speak. However, one by one, they, too, began to contribute. They had learnt from the earlier sharing that their own stories also had a place and they were less self-conscious as a result of this experience. Indeed, the whole class was completely engaged and attentive, and some became a little tearful as they told their story.

As the lesson drew to a close, I recalled everyone to the point of the lesson. I held up a picture of a monument to the holocaust. A faceless figure carved in stone wearing a *tallit* and *tefillin* holding its head in anguish. I looked at the quiet, thoughtful class and asked them to remember the two stories I had told them at the beginning of the lesson and I asked them if they could now understand. All around the room heads nodded silently. They had begun to develop an empathy with others who were different to themselves.

We had not expected the lesson to be emotional. Rather we had expected it to remain on a cerebral level with the pupils able to make an intellectual connection with the value of their objects with that of the Torah to the Jews. I was concerned about the fact that some of them had cried. I needed to find out how they felt about what happened in order to understand what learning had taken place. The subsequent discussion made it clear that the lesson was felt by the pupils to be one of the most valuable experiences that they had engaged in at school. The pupils spoke about the fact that they had shared things they had never talked about before. They spoke at their relief at finding other class members feeling loss. They felt reassurance that the adults present in the class also felt these things. Then they spoke about feeling different as a class group. They spoke of respect, trust, warmth and relaxation in one another's presence. Finally, and most importantly for the learning exercise, they conveyed the information that they were beginning to see how religion was related to people's feelings, it was about how people felt about things.

What we found was that the process enabled pupils to

- build links between their own inner self and the spirituality of the people in the religious tradition they were studying
- share their thoughts and feelings and develop emotional literacy
- empathise with each other
- share their stories with the class

Other aspects of the process included a focus on:

- *Special places* which help us to relate to places of worship as we explore why people go there and we discover they are places of healing and peace
- *Special Writing* which helps us to understand how believers are moved, inspired and comforted by what is written in their holy books
- *Special Journeys* which help us to understand pilgrimage
- *Special celebrations* which helps us to understand the importance of festivals and rites of passage' where the pupils reflect on their need to feel connection with their family, ancestors and community

Discussion of the Learning Approach

Circle Work Built on Mutual Trust and Respect

All our pupils are taught in a circle where everyone can make eye contact talk and listen to each other. It involves and engages. Pupils have boards under their chairs that they can use to rest on for any brief written exercises. In some classes they turn to work at desks that are placed around the walls. Pupils are taught to use the circle respectfully and effectively through games and exercises. The inclusive and engaging nature of this style of teaching and learning means that sabotage is rare.

Teachers use communication skills such as Transactional Analysis developed by Eric Berne and Student Centred Learning techniques used by Donna Brandes to create a learning environment where cooperation is the norm and behaviour management is rarely an issue.

The teachers learn to work with the pupils in a non-confrontational way. Using the 'put down' rule they establish in the room themselves at all times, together with lots of praise and encouragement.

A Multi Sensory Learning Environment in Which Literacy is Never the Starting Point

In the centre of the circle there is always a display to focus the attention of the students. It might be a simple one of flowers and a candle set out on an upturned plastic box and covered with fabric by a teacher who moves from classroom to classroom or who is doing a lesson with reflection, meditation and stories. Or it may fill the entire floor space representing, for example, an island, where the children find themselves shipwrecked, unable to escape. There they form a new

society in the course of which they create rites of passage, a holy book recording the story of the shipwreck, a festival to recall and celebrate that significant event and a special place to preserve important artefacts from the ship. This becomes a focus for pilgrimage. The Island is complete with water, sand, driftwood, shells and costumes from the story the pupils will construct together, to the sound of the sea and waves crashing on the shore.

The island takes a whole term to develop, laying the foundation for the pupils subsequent studies of religion, for instance, when they are reminded of when they were on the island and they instinctively decided to welcome the first baby with a special ceremony? This can lead into a study of initiation rites of other religious traditions.

This is how pupils begin RE in our school, working in an engaging, absorbing way, developing their own spirituality as they explore how they would react, lesson by lesson as the situation on the island unfolds. They use that experience to help them make sense of the established traditions. The myths, symbols and rituals that they instinctively created from their own spirituality enable them to understand those of people very different from their own.

Creating a Concrete Platform from which to Understand Abstract Concepts

Another set represents the universe, as pupils study the big bang and consider whether the universe was created or designed. Clouds of white muslin cover several coiled sets of fairy lights representing the galaxies. Dotted around the set are photographs of galaxies taken with the Hubble telescope. Pupils explore the expansion and contraction of the universe, the vast distances in space and the time light takes to reach us from galaxies that might no longer be there, through a vivid and dramatic lesson where they enter a darkened room to the music of the Star Wars theme. The only light in the room comes from the galaxies spread out on the floor. The multi sensory set helps them grasp the abstract concept of infinity as they consider the theory of the pulsating universe.

On another occasion a set represents water in all its forms to help pupils understand the abstract concept of the Atman. White fabric represents snow, Christmas trees covered in cotton wool and a pool of water hung with ice made from foil makes a sparkling winter scene. Photographs of clouds ice floes and frosted trees lay among the set. Mist rises from a sky fountain. Like water in all its many forms, God is in everything, a universal life force or energy.

Music

Music is used throughout lessons to create atmosphere, it may be dramatic or calm. It may be from the tradition they are studying, welcoming pupils into a classroom where the whole room has been transformed into a Hindu temple or a Synagogue or an Orthodox church. It is faded to quieten the children with no need to hush them, or it can be accompanied by the words 'after I have played this track I would like you to have...' which helps to mark transitions in the progress of the lesson.

Literacy is Never the Starting Point

Religion is an *experience*, it is something felt and reflected upon. It may not be possible to describe and share it. It is personal, involving, moving and, sometimes, overwhelming. It cannot be confined to something learnt from a textbook if it is to be a learning experience that is transforming. Reading and writing excludes, frustrates and de-motivates many pupils, especially boys, so literacy is never the starting point. Instead the focus is on learning through rich, powerful, multi-sensory experiences, where everyone can learn and participate on an equal basis. Anyone who may observe a Theatre of Learning class should be unable to tell which children have literacy difficulties and which are the most able. When I was asked to consider separating pupils of different abilities on the grounds that a mixed ability examination class might hold back academic progress, I asked the pupils for their thoughts on this idea. In response, a very able sixteen year old said 'It is important that all of us from different backgrounds and abilities learn together. We need to listen to each other and to learn how one another thinks and feels. It would be wrong to separate the people who can't read and write easily, or who just don't like school. Anyway, that is not the point of RE'.

Therefore, in the Theatre of learning approach, reading and writing come later. Detailed written tasks are set up with the class *after* the experiential work. Pupils have differentiated tasks ranging from cloze procedure, sentence stems and essays which enable them to write at the highest level of the national curriculum. What they don't do is write in class. The work that comes back from home, where they have been able to think and reflect about the powerful experiences they shared, and at that point read and research from a textbook, is detailed and thoughtful. Even the least gifted pupils are more able to write from something they experienced. The most able are stimulated to think and to research.

Religion Neutral Exercises

These are vital tools in helping pupils make sense of RE and developing their own spirituality. It is a term I devised to describe an activity designed to parallel an important aspect of worship in any tradition. It began with Prayer. In an attempt to enable pupils to empathise with the feelings associated with prayer without asking them to pray, I developed a series of reflective exercises that parallel aspects of Christian prayer. They are not prayer because they are not directed toward a divine being. Instead they ask students to:

- Think about something they need which helps them to understand intercession
- Think about a relationship that needs healing which helps them to understand forgiveness
- Think about something for which they feel grateful which helps them to understand Praise and Thanksgiving

These reflections ultimately led pupils to the realisation that, for religious people, prayer is a conversation with God. Christians believe they get an answer as well as comfort and inspiration. The pupil's written reflections that emerged from this exercise were significant and transforming. They appeared to have developed an awareness that enabled them to make real changes in their relationships. This is reflected in the following extracts from fifteen year-old pupils in a mixed ability class:

- I have spent today putting back together the relationship I have with my mother, she has helped me with many worries that I had about my real Dad. I am ready to allow myself to see my Step-Dad as a friend rather than as an enemy. I'm ready to learn how to trust again, and I am going to put past pain behind me and move on.
- I thought about my Auntie who is very ill and going to die of lung cancer very soon. When I was sitting in RE I realised how much she means to me, so when I got home, me and my Mum rang Sunderland and I told her how much I really care.
- After that lesson my sister came down from Folkstone and sorted her relationship out with my mum and is living with us again. I don't believe in god but the lesson reflected on prayers and I feel it worked.
- I think by setting aside a particular moment in time regularly, you can become aware of things you might not have noticed before.
- It actually made me realise how important everything is to me and that I really should take nothing for granted
- I think this lesson was to show the value of prayer....the exercises help to raise people's awareness of things already present in their lives.

Another learning experience that is based on religion neutral exercises is when pupils learn about spiritual healing at Lourdes. The pupils reflect on troubles in their lives that need taking away. They think about what they could do about that. They write a few words about it on rice paper and one by one, with a sense of ritual and respect, place their troubles in a bowl of water, in front of a set representing the grotto at Lourdes, lit with candles and fairy lights. As they sit in the classroom with the Ave Maria playing quietly in the background, listening to the story of Bernadette, the rice paper slowly dissolves. At the end of the lesson a pupil is asked to bring me a piece of paper from the bowl, they find the water is clear and we reflect on how the pilgrims who have visited Lourdes feel on their journey home, thereby we explore the meaning and purpose of symbol and ritual.

The academic work that follows from this involves examining the arguments for and against the verification of religious experience. Work not normally tackled below sixth form. In all their work the spiritual is the starting point, giving pupils something of real value for their own development but motivating them to work and write at an academically more challenging level.

Re-enactment

Re-enactment is another vital aspect of this learning process. For instance, learning about the Orthodox Church within a set containing an altar and iconostasis, and filled with the sound of the liturgy, we re-enact the Easter midnight service in a darkened classroom, gradually filling it with light as a pupil in role as a priest, representing the resurrected Christ comes through the iconostasis. Every pupil lights a candle from his. Before we do this every pupil is invited to light a candle for someone or something they have lost. This helps them empathise with a style of worship, involving the five senses and the whole person, body and soul.

The Value of Working with Feelings

Addressing the feelings in education, that is affective learning is at the foundations of the Theatre of Learning approach and it needs some discussion in light of the debate between education that focuses on cerebral contact with traditions versus an approach to learning that is emotive reflected in the kind of experiential RE that we have been discussing here, particularly as it affects education in British schools. It would appear that emotivism is criticised on the basis that feelings are not to be trusted and are not an adequate basis upon which to base moral judgements and values. Thus, feelings, which are an integral part of the build up of young people are neglected, and at the worst, ignored. Certainly, there appears to be a level of discomfort in British society when feelings become the topic for conversation. Many appear to have a problem about displaying their emotions and instead, show a strong desire to control them, rather than allowing them to do their vital work in enabling us to be healthy and whole individuals. The critics of emotivism argue that the emotions cannot provide us with knowledge. This argument is clearly contradicted by recent theories on emotional intelligence (for instance, Goleman, 1995) which promote the concept that the emotions are vital for the effective functioning of our rational intelligence. Certainly, our emotions enable us to interpret and apply to our own lives what we have learned from all areas of the curriculum and life itself. Most importantly they enable us to be empathetic which is fundamental to enabling children to care about others.

The point I wish to make here is that the powerful feelings that pupils in my classes experience and express are not only valuable but vital. The overall feeling of being in the classroom and working in this way together which is playful, relaxed, soothing and pleasurable as well as challenging promotes deep and transformed learning.

Therefore, I offer the argument that we need to develop empathetic feelings alongside of, rather than instead of, academic rigor. This points to a helpful and healthy way forward, not only for the individual but also as a tool to enable them to make critical, academic judgements. I want my pupils to be *affected* by the literature they read, the drama they witness and the history they study. I want them to *think* and *feel* and make decisions about the people they want to be and the society they want to live in.

The Power of Ritual and Liturgy: Provoking Change in People

Rituals and different styles of liturgy are an important part of many religious traditions because they are profoundly meaningful to the people who willingly choose to take part in them. Paul Tillich, a twentieth century theologian who talks in his book on religious language of 'participatory symbols', says they are things we do or act out, which enable us to experience something we would not otherwise have been able to. We emerge strengthened, inspired, renewed with a changed sense of identity or perception. They give us a sense that nothing will ever be quite the same again. That is a real Rite of Passage. That is what happens when prayer and the Eucharist really do their job. That is what happens in Jihad, Bar Mitzvah, Baptism, Ordination and Marriage. That is, also, what happens in hunting magic, in Neanderthal burials, in the mystery religions, when the Viking Berserkers prepared themselves for battle, and in every ancient tribal initiation ceremony that we know of. Indeed, it is also what happened in the training of the Jedi in the *Star Wars* series. This is no coincidence. George Lucas, creator of the *Star Wars* phenomenon says:

I consciously set about to recreate the old myths. I wanted to use ones that deal with issues that exist today. The more research I did the more I realised that the issues are the same ones that existed 3,000 years ago...*Star Wars* takes the issues that religion represents and turns them into a more modern and easily understandable form.

Lucas' ability to make meaningful the spiritual battle of being human to all kinds of people from all walks of life and all ages is of significance. Further, it was recognised by Joseph Campbell, the mythographer and friend of Lucas, whose last television series before he died was filmed in Lucas' library, where he identifies the importance of the Force and the significant spiritual journey of Luke Skywalker and his father, and of his teacher Obi Wan Kenobi.

Making ritual and liturgy powerful again involves tapping into a child's basic spiritual core. If we start there, which is what Lucas has done with his epic exploration of good and evil, and devise an experience for our pupils which will enable them to get in touch with their own needs, religion will come alive for them.

Developing Secular Spirituality

Finally, I would like to offer a strong case for developing secular spirituality in our children alongside the study of traditions. If we believe that developing whole healthy children with the beliefs and values that we need for our society can only come from teaching them about the traditions we will continue to fail in answering their needs.

The results indicated by pupils who have experienced the Theatre of Learning approach suggest that children's desire to have ritual, symbolism and ceremony is

natural. If they are not members of a Tradition they are left with nothing to express significant moments in their life's journey, and they have little that is concrete from which to form values and develop integrity. When God the Counsellor is removed and there is no substitute, they have little opportunity and skill to reflect on life events and relationships or to pray. As well, there are no mechanisms for confession, repentance, forgiveness and growth, all aspects that reflect the relational dimension of their lives. The religion neutral exercises as well as the participatory symbols that are incorporated into the Theatre of Learning approach offer a way forward in this area.

To conclude, religious education, which has focused on the study of other people's beliefs and practices alongside belief in a transcendent being, has not worked. It must be *more* than that, it must hit the spiritual target. Perhaps we should be looking to separate the two so that a really affective curriculum can be planned to develop pupils spirituality where the study of the Traditions are included rather than the whole focus being on the study of Traditions.

The teaching and learning experiences that have emerged from this approach point to the fact that spirituality is innate and that that not only can we nurture it but it needs to be given expression since children appear to be searching for it.

Successful RE, in which children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is really taking place, happens when the opportunity for spiritual growth is provided and planned for, alongside the teaching about the spiritual development and expression of other people and their traditions. It works because the whole teacher engages and develops the whole child as the intellectual and emotional needs of both teacher and children are met.

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